He Made the Stars Also

Perry F. Webb, D.D.



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By PERRY F. WEBB, D.D.

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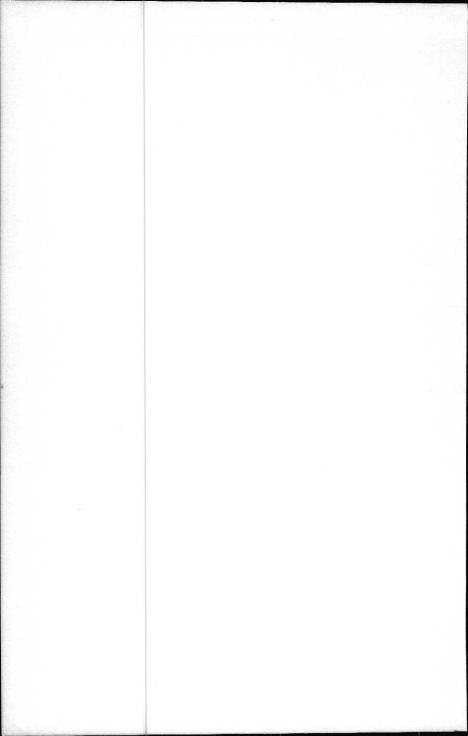
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He Made the Stars Also Also by the Author:

Doves in the Dust

Pulpit Prayers

He Made the Stars Also

By Perry F. Webb, D.D.



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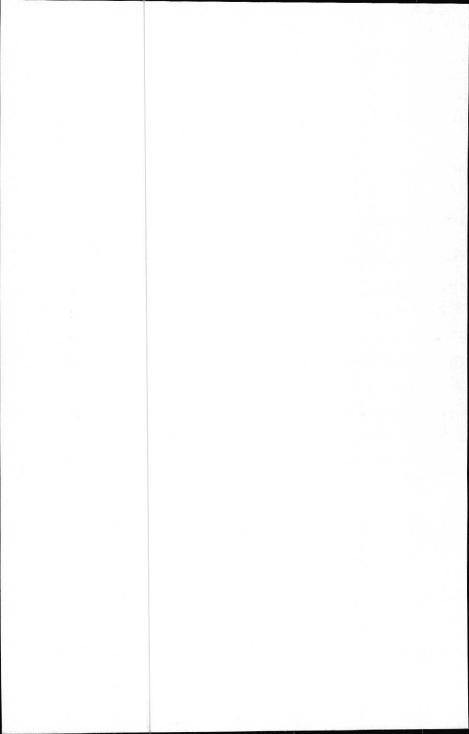
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Dedicated

To my beloved sister,
Olive Webb Murphy
And

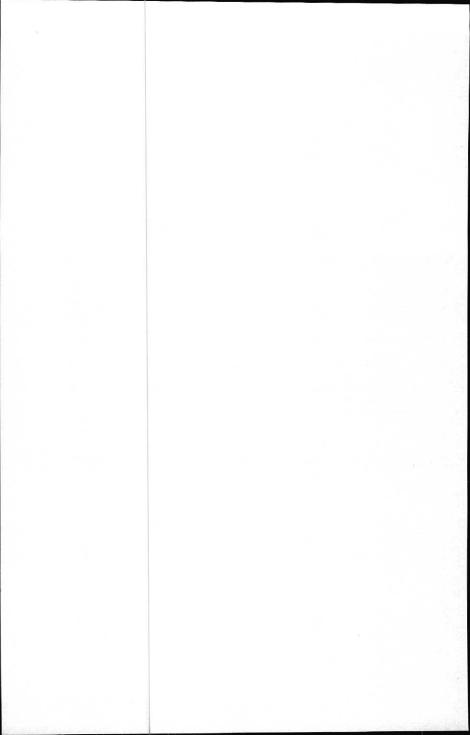
To my cherished cousin,

Gertrude Buckley Windsor

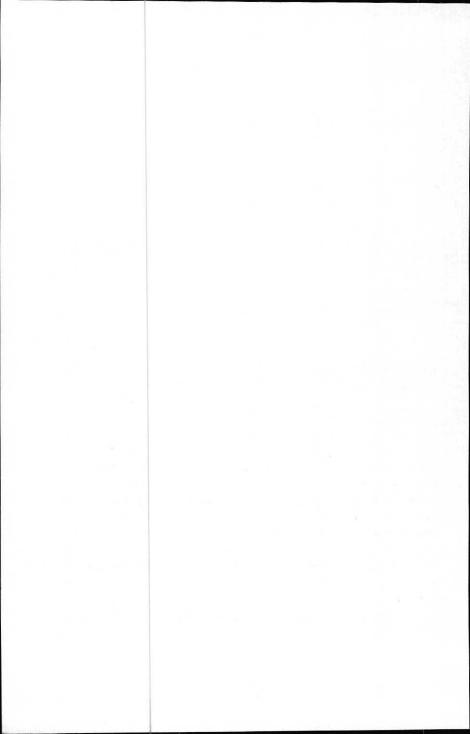


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He made the stars also



He Made the Stars Also

"And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also."

Genesis 1:16

What are the stars? To the astronomer they are luminous celestial bodies so distant and so set in space as to give them their peculiar and attractive appearance. While no one would be likely to find too much fault with this abbreviated statement, yet is it too much to say that the poet or the lyricist or the minstrel with a baptized imagination can come nearer the truth? The stars have been described as "sentinels of the night." Spurgeon called them God's travelling evangelists. They are the "poetry of heaven" according to Byron; and Longfellow speaks of them as being "the forget-menots of the angels." Well, no matter, they are the scriptures

of the sky and assist in declaring the glory of God. (Ps. 19:1)

One night God called Abraham outdoors and said, in other words, "Look at the sky and count the stars; your progeny will be as numerous as they are." (Gen. 15:5) But how many millions of stars there are! And if you jumped on a light beam travelling at 186,000 miles per second, it would take you four and one-half years to arrive at the nearest star. And, amazing as it may seem, without doubt we will see tonight some of the same stars that were visible to Abraham in that faraway land, so long ago. The Psalmist said that "God telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names." And then he adds in wonder, "Great is our Lord and of great power: his understanding is infinite." (Ps. 147:4-5) In Judges 5:20 we are told "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera," which probably means that all the forces of heaven are against the kind of life represented by that ancient warrior.

In the book of Daniel we read, "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever." (Dan. 12:3) In Numbers we are told of a star that shall come out of Jacob and a scepter which shall rise out of Israel. And when the Wise Men came seeking the newborn King, they said, "We have seen 'his star.'" (Mat. 2:2) In Revelation 6:13 we read the chilling statement, "The stars of heaven fell unto the earth"; but, a little later, in Revelation 22:16, we read the thrilling statement, "I, Jesus, am . . . the bright and morning star"; that is, he heralds the approaching day, the day when he shall reign, whose right it is, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Now, turning to the massive book of Genesis, we stand in solemn awe before this magnificent and stupendous state-

ment, "And God said, let there be light: and there was light." Brilliant offspring of the Eternal: the eloquence of light! Later he made "two great lights," the greater to rule the day and the lesser to rule the night. After crowning the sun as king of the day and the moon as queen of the night, we read these festive and transplendent words, "he made the stars also." Yes, the bright and timid stars!

The Lord keeps us well supplied with beautiful things here on earth: fleet-winged birds, fragrant flowers, majestic mountains, flowing streams, verdant pastures; but most of his beauties are on his "upper shelf" called the horizon or the sky. They are out of reach, we hope forever! The stars are to be looked at and wondered over, but let no man ever pluck one and offer it for sale! They belong to the universe, to all who have open eyes to see, or a mind to dream or a heart to thrill in the presence of the sublime.

Someone has suggested that the stars were not really necessary to the population of the sky, but were simply "thrown in" to add beauty and nobility to the universe. At any rate, it is just like the Lord our God to do more than is absolutely required. A business firm had an excellent motto we all would do well to adopt, "We do a little better than is necessary." This surely is the secret of success in every realm of life. "Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." (Luke 6:38)

Three Classes

For our present purpose we may divide people into three classes:

1. There are those who never do their duty, in the

home, the church, or the state. They evade every responsibility, dodge every opportunity to share either their goods or their goodness, if any. These people are spectators in the game of life and not participators; they have no compelling sense of "oughtness" and feel no ecstatic thrill of what Henry Drummond once called "otherism." All such are the despair of pastors and other church officials, as well as civic leaders. They never heard of the meaningful words of Ezra, the prophet of God who spoke of people who "offered . . . as the duty of every day required." (Ezra 3:4)

A cowboy was soundly converted. He immediately gave himself wholeheartedly to serving God and man. When someone commented on his zeal, he replied, "Jim is my boss. If I spent my time serenading him or telling him what a fine fellow he is, yet neglecting to 'ride fence' and look after his cows, he wouldn't like it. So when I became a Christian I felt I owed it to the good Lord to get to work for him and do all the good I can in every way I know how." Perhaps that has an old-fashioned ring to it, but at least it is Scriptural, for, as the Bible puts it, we are saved by grace through faith, but we are saved "unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:18-20) Some years ago I read of a "quit" meeting that was being held in Georgia. People arose during the service and announced the things they were going to "quit doing." One man got up and said he wasn't sure just how many bad habits he had. "But," he added, "I have been pretty trifling in my church, and I am going to quit doing nothing!" An ungrammatical resolution but a good one just the same. Do we dare to follow in his train?

2. There are those who profess to do their duty: how many belong to this group only eternity will reveal. The Lord told of a pious Pharisee who went to the temple to

pray. Although he addressed his prayer to God, he really was engaged in a period of pretentious self-congratulation. There was no question about the man's formal goodness. He had never defrauded his neighbor, and was certainly just in all his dealings with others. Likewise, his personal life was above reproach; he was moral and clean. He could look the seventh commandment in the face without blushing. Further, he was very religious and careful to observe the requirements of the law. In fact, from all the evidence, he was a man of integrity. He was doing his duty, so he boldly professed. But for all his cordial qualities and with all his duties well performed, he seemed unaware of the deeper duty to love mercy and walk humbly with his God. As a result, the self-confessed sinner (publican) was preferred to

(Luke 18:9ff) 3. There are those who do their duty and a little more.

the self-satisfied saint.

These are the ones who have "stars also" in their lives. In the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25ff) we have five actors, not counting the thieves. There is the "certain man" who was assaulted by the thieves, beaten, robbed and left half dead beside the highway; then the priest and the Levite who passed by on the other side of the road; and the Samaritan who stopped and gave assistance; and the innkeeper. For the most part attention has been given to the failure of the priest and Levite, and the generosity and kindness of the Samaritan. Certainly the conduct of these "church officials" was reprehensible, as the conduct of the Samaritan was commendable. But consider the innkeeper: he represents that large class who, in a perfectly honorable way, render service for value received. With him it was simply a plain business proposition: so much money, so much service. He did what he was supposed to do, what he was paid to do, and nothing more. He had the sun and moon in his life, but at night there were no stars.

On the contrary, think again of the Samaritan: after all he did — binding up the victim's wounds, taking him to the inn, perhaps staying with him through the night — he paid the innkeeper all his expenses and then added, "Take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee." Here is compassion beyond calculation; it is duty plus; it is life with an extra; it is going the second mile; it is "the stars also."

When I was a lad, it was a personal pleasure to take my father's check and pay the grocery bill the first of each month. One reason — perhaps the main one — I made no complaint was that when the bill was paid, the groceryman would fill a sack with candy and hand it to me. Now, we had already received full value from him, but that sack of candy was to me "the stars also."

I recall a good woman who was getting some old clothes and shoes to send to an unfortunate woman in the mountains who had suffered many reverses and was in dire need. In this needy family was a boy some nine years of age. It so happened that the woman sending help also had a boy of about the same age. She suggested to her son that he might send some of his clothes also. Presently he came back into his mother's room with a pair of pants. As he started to throw them on the "missionary pile" he felt something in one of the pockets. Running his hand inside, he pulled out a bag of beautiful marbles which he had forgotten all about. He started to keep them, but after a few moments of hesitancy, he put them back in the pocket of the pants. Later on there came a letter from the mountain woman expressing her gratitude. Then in a postscript, obviously written by her little boy, were these words, "Thank you so much for the pants but especially the marbles." You could almost see his eyes shining as they reflected "the stars also."

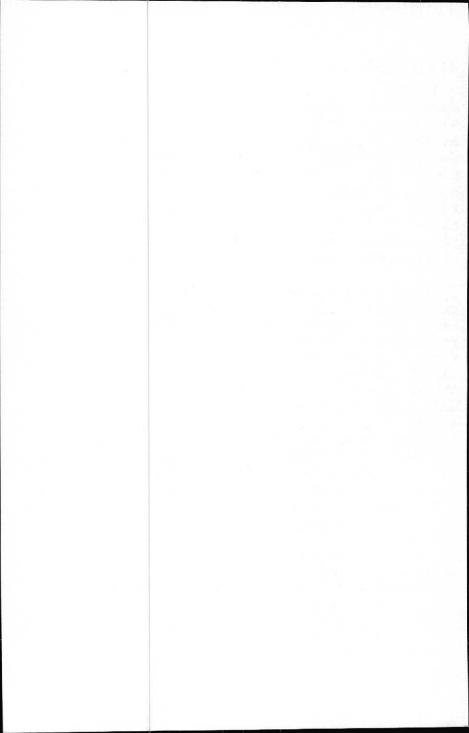
The Inspiration for This Spirit

Life is an open book. God not only knows the outward conduct but also the inner motive, the secret intention, the hidden purpose. "Thou God seest me," cried poor friendless Hagar. (Gen. 16:13) And the Psalmist said, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? and whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell (Sheol), behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me." (Ps. 139:7-11)

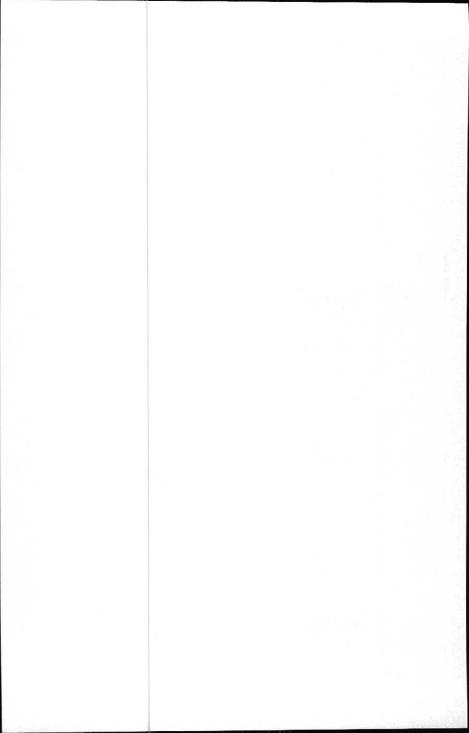
An old sculptor, asked why he took so much care in carving statues that would be placed high on the church steeple, where no man would ever notice any imperfections, replied, "God will see them." So the spirit of going beyond mere duty will come as we remember that God sees, observes, and takes knowledge of all we do, and he will not forget. Whatever we do, however we give or serve has an effect upon us and others forever. We have to do with things that will endure after the sun has turned to a cinder and the last star has burned to its silvery socket. We are working in the interest of a kingdom that shall never die; ours is a task that shall continue throughout the cycles of an unmeasured and unending eternity.

Let us knock down the walls around our circumscribed and provincial lives and get a vision of the "beyond," of the "forever," and we surely will be possessed with the spirit of giving and loving and living above the average, and of adding "the stars also."

Something more! Here is a worthy motto for every life.



Rest for the restless



Rest for the Restless

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

St. Matthew 11:28ff

These are refreshing words. They are as a spring of cool water in a desert place, or the shadow of a rock in a weary land. They were originally addressed to a conquered people whose land had been overrun by the invader; whose rich harvests and teeming fisheries and most of whose other wealth went to feed the lavish luxury of ruthless politicians and demagogues. Again and again they had risen in rebellion, but to no avail. Their burdens were made heavier and their toil more exacting after each uprising. They were indeed a heavy-laden people.

Added to their economic and political burdens was their

religion with its hundreds of rules, observations, regulations, ceremonies, washings and repeated prayers which they toiled in vain to keep. They could never have a clear conscience or a peaceful heart, for no one could possibly meet all the demands and man-made regulations required by their religious leaders. Thus their religion was a load instead of a lift; it was a weight instead of a wing, and it was something they had to carry instead of something to carry or sustain or help them.

I fully recognize it is prosaic and commonplace to say the world is full of weary people, weary and heavy-laden. Disturbed, disappointed, overloaded almost to the point of exhaustion. An amazing percentage of the citizens of our nation change their residence each year. This unrest also shows up in the home, where there are tensions between husbands and wives, and parents and children. In the church it makes itself felt in fussy, quarrelsome and irritable members, who are difficult to get along with. In a certain church there was a division. An old man was asked. "What side are you on?" He replied, "I haven't made up my mind yet, but when I do, I am going to be very bitter." At a called meeting of the deacons one time, a late member came rushing in just as a vote was being taken. He called out, "I don't know what you are voting on, but I am against it."

During his last illness, a noble preacher was heard to murmur, "I am so tired." His was physical weariness, but there is a great weariness of mind, and soul and spirit which afflicts many lives. There seems to be very little verve, lift or vivacity among God's people today; so little Christian joy. Burdens are heavy and faces are drawn, tempers are short and emotions are undisciplined.

Now to all such our Lord speaks these gracious words: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and

I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

We shall completely miss the blessing these words are intended to bring if we consider them as a pious bromide, a bit of religious mummery or simply a ministerial cliché. God help us to take them as the Master intended: personal, pertinent, timely and timeless. Here are two kinds of rest:

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First, the rest that is given. "Come . . . I will give you rest." Now the cause of most unrest is sin. Let's face it honestly: here is the poison that has fevered life; the root of weakness and weariness. Sin disturbs, agitates and upsets more than all other experiences combined. Our unlawful desires, inordinate and often unchristian ambitions, our ungenerous judgments - cruel and censorious - our greedy covetousness, our passion for personal preference and social popularity, our vanity, pride and green-eyed jealousy these and other concerns like them are the very things that shake us, upset us by day and night, and arouse conscience with its accusing finger. The Scriptures (Luke 7:35) give us the account of a woman who was a sinner, who came where Jesus was being entertained. She stood behind him weeping, and began washing his feet with her tears and wiping them with the hairs of her head. She knew nothing of peace of mind and joy of heart. Why? Her sin! I do not know what it was, but no matter, any sin, whether evil thoughts or words or actions, creates discord and starts a civil war in the soul and destroys peace and rest. The Bible says "the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." (Isa. 57:20)

A prominent employee of a large firm said he was sick. His wife took him to a celebrated clinic. Nothing of an organic nature showed up. Yet he kept insisting he was sick and was going to die. A pastor was called to the home. The good wife met him at the door, explained the situation, then said, "He claims now he is paralyzed; he won't eat and says he is going to die, and he is dying before my very eyes. He is back in his bedroom now and refuses to say anything except 'I am going to die.'" The pastor urged her to be in prayer while he went back to talk to this man, whom he knew. After a warm greeting, the pastor set forth the reason he knew the man was not really sick: a reputable clinic had given him every possible test. But he insisted, "They have missed it; I am dying, and now I am paralyzed from my waist down." The pastor suddenly realized he was a thousand miles off the track on his counselling. So he leaned over, put his hand on the other man's hand, and looking him in the eye said, "What is your sin?" It was as if he had struck him. A look of sheer agony came to the man's face. He turned over, wrapping his face in his pillow, and began to sob like a child, shaking the very bed. In a moment he turned back and said to the minister, "Why did you ask me that?" The man of God replied, "Because I am convinced your trouble is not physical but moral and spiritual." Then the story poured forth, as hot lava. It was a sad story, too often told and heard; a story of trust betrayed, of prodigality unrestrained. He then asked, "Can you do anything to help me?" My soul, this was where the preacher could be at his best! He went on his knees beside the bed and said to the man, "Repeat my words after me, if you can do so from your heart." Then followed a simple, tender prayer of confession and request for forgiveness. When it was ended, this man repeating every word to the "amen," reached over, took the preacher in his arms, still

weeping and began to give thanks to the good Lord for his cleansing mercy. Following this moving scene, the preacher said, "Now get up, put on your clothes and let's go out and tell your wife God has healed you — yes, healed you." He protested that he was paralyzed and couldn't walk. The preacher insisted. He finally gingerly touched the floor with his feet, gradually stood up, and of course he could walk. He then almost shouted. It was a joyful time. God forgave him, cleansed him and lifted him up.

Now to all who are conscious of unconfessed, unforsaken and therefore unforgiven sin, these blessed words come with the brightest hope: our Lord offers rest — not rest in sin but from sin. "Come . . . I will give —" not show or tell but GIVE you rest. It was an ancient writer (Tersteegan) who once said that every living thing can rest and be satisfied only in its own element. The fish in water, the bird in the air, and our spirits in God! Now our Lord gives rest because he forgives the sin that causes unrest. But this sort of rest cannot be earned; it is a gift, the dowry of grace; the fruit of personal fellowship with Christ. Thus we may have peace, rest and all their joyous accompaniments if and when we are in good standing and full fellowship with our Lord. Have you sinned? Are you disturbed about it? "Come unto me," says the Lord, in open complete confession. "Come unto me and I will give you rest."

I am told that along some of the roads in India are small parks very much like our wayside rest areas, where a weary traveller may turn aside, lay down his burden and find rest. They are called "sumatanga." A native Christian once remarked, "Christ is my sumatanga," my resting place. Yes, he is all of that and more, much more, to a penitent soul. Put him to the test, now!

And then there is the second kind of rest: the rest that is earned. "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls." We all have a yoke of some kind: pride, ambition, greed, remorse, sinful indulgence, a bad spirit. These are the yokes of Satan. Christ says, "Take my yoke," it's easy, which means it is individually fitted, well-fitted, therefore "easy." The word "yoke" is closely allied with the word "subjugation" which comes from two Latin words "sub" and "jugum," which signifies "to bring under the yoke of dominion." It indicates submission and obedience. It is as if the Lord had said, "If you submit to me, obey me instead of your whims, prejudices, fancies, and personal desires, you will FIND rest." It is the joy and peace that come when we are yoked up with Christ in definite Christian work.

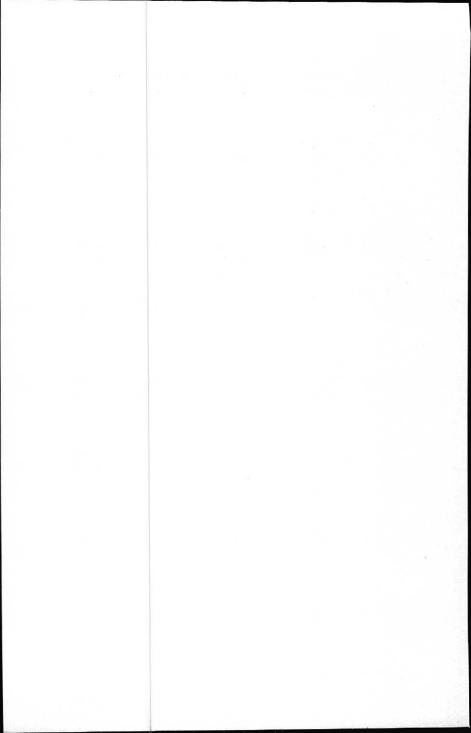
There is a legend that originally the birds could not fly. They could sing but not fly. God had some work to be done one day and put a load on each bird. At first some thought to complain but instead they obeyed, and as they started off with their burdens, they were turned into wings. And so when their burdens were accepted from God, they were turned into wings so they could fly. This is just a myth, but it is true that when we willingly take up the work of Christ, we shall discover a new lift of life and soul — a new peace and joy.

Some years ago a man was converted. He said God spoke peace to his heart. "My sins were forgiven, but I didn't take up the work of my Lord. For a number of years I just drifted along, unhappy in my Christian life. Gnawing doubts and gloomy fears began to come. I was miserable. But now the story is different: I have put myself under Christ's yoke, to do his work, and I know the rest and peace that are to be

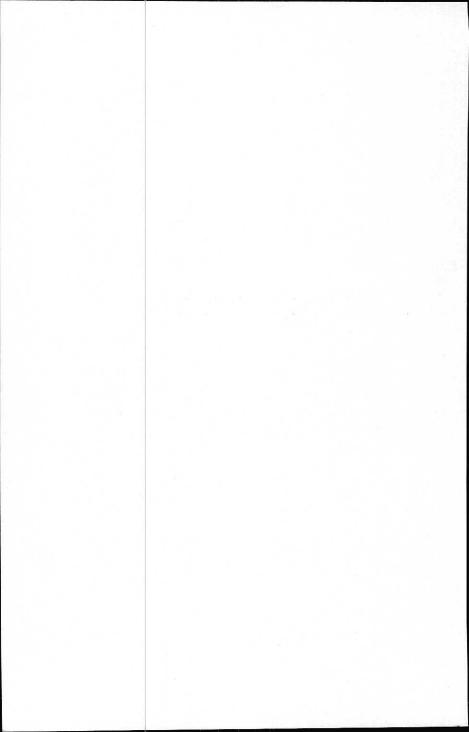
found in Christian service." This thought was beautifully expressed by Longfellow in his famous poem about the village blacksmith:

Toiling, rejoicing, sorrowing, Onward through life he goes, Each morning sees some task begun, Each evening sees its close; Something attempted, something done Has EARNED a night's repose.

Rest from sin; rest in service. Here is the gracious invitation of our dear Savior, and it is for "all" and that includes you and me. Here is also the open secret of a glad heart and a useful life.



 $T_{
m HE\ WISDOM\ OF\ WORSHIP}$



The Wisdom of Worship

"O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hand are the deep places of the earth; the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.

"O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: unto whom I sware in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest." Psalm 95

It is a famous saying that "man is incurably religious." The Psalmist said, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." (42:1) Both history and experience testify that there is an instinct in mortal man to worship. It is an undying "thirst." "If there were no god, man would invent one." He cannot be satisfied with anything less than himself, nor equal with himself, but only with something that is above himself. God "hath set eternity" in the human heart. (Eccl. 3:11) There is an "ear" in every heart, and this gives meaning to the profound statement in Psalm 42 "deep calleth unto deep": the depth of the human soul calls to the depth of Divine mercy.

Among all people, however primitive, there is to be found some sort of an altar upon which some sort of sacrifice is made to some sort of god for some sort of purpose. And so long as the mind wonders in the presence of mystery; so long as the heart hungers in the presence of infinity; so long as the soul trembles in the presence of perfectivity — so long will man worship in tears and prayers and praises.

How shall we define worship? Who can define the music of a waterfall, or the blush of dawn, or the song of a bird, or the sighing of the wind or the laughter of little children? Thus it is with worship: It is seeking to define the indefinable, or trying to express the inexpressible, or explain the inexplicable. Of course it means "ascribing worth" and comes from the word "worthship." And to be sure, our Lord is "worth" more than all else or all others. We speak of a man worshipping money or popularity or pleasure. By this we mean he ascribes supreme "worth" to these things. When a man worships God, he ascribes supreme "worth" to Him; God has the priority: he puts God at the top of his list of values. It is therefore not a posture of the body but of the soul: it is the prodigal returning to his father; the hungry

to partake of the viands of grace; the thirsty drinking from the fountain that never runs dry; the weary seeking rest; the mortal looking at the eternal; the tempted yearning for victory; the human adoring the Divine; the heart opening unto God. It is the "eye that sees the invisible; the ear that hears the inaudible; the hand that touches the intangible."

But is is easier to describe than to define worship. Suppose we put it this way: when you leave God's House stronger in faith, brighter in hope, warmer in love, broader in sympathy, purer in heart and more determined to do the will of God — then you have worshipped!

The Proper Object of Worship

This is imperative, and important beyond all else. Jesus told the woman at Jacob's well: "Ye worship ye know not what." And when Paul was at Athens, "His spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry." (Acts 17:16) He even saw an altar to "The Unknown God." (verse 23) And then in delivering his message to the Athenians, he said "whom ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." We ought to know whom we worship. In Psalm 95 our God is spoken of as *creator*. "The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land. O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker."

There was a time in the primeval past — before clocks, calendars, days, weeks, months, years, decades, generations or centuries — there was a time when there was no revolving earth, or flowing streams or lofty mountains or living man. All these were brought forth by an action, a movement, a measure so distinguished, so sublime as to be called a "creation." "In the beginning God created." (Gen. 1:1) Some time ago I heard a preacher say, "In the dim past man

gradually evolved from the slime until he became self-conscious." I asked him at the close of the service if he really believed what he said. He was indignant and assured me he did. "But," I said, "what you preached and what the Word of God teaches are exactly opposite." He became angry and told me to believe what I wanted to and he would do the same. I persisted, and pressed home my query, "Didn't you say man came out of the slime?" He didn't want to talk any further. (I knew there was something "slimy" about him!)

It is related that Haydn was attending a performance of his great oratorio "The Creation." The opera house in Vienna was crowded. The aged composer was sitting in a private balcony. As the chorus and orchestra swung into that magnificent musical peroration "And God said, let there be light, and there was light," the crowd arose spontaneously and cheered as they turned to the balcony where Haydn sat. The old man struggled to his feet, waved for silence, then said, "Not from me but from God above, it all came." Yes, my friends, "from God above" all life came, and it was by his glorious creation that the world was made. When we worship let us remember that we are bowing before the CREATOR.

He is also spoken of as "the rock." This is a favorite metaphor with Moses and David and Isaiah. It suggests stability, certainty, security. "And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: they shall perish but thou remainest . . . and thy years shall have no end." (Heb. 1:10f)

By referring to the Lord God as a "Rock" it is not meant that he is inactive, impassive, or indifferent; certainly it does not mean that he is unfeeling. But it does mean he is not whimsical, capricious or variable. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. His power, his comfort, his love and his mercy remain unchanged; he is the same in winter's cold as in summer's heat; by day or by night; in prosperity, adversity or monotony: he is the same! During the dark days of World War II when the Japanese were sweeping everything before them, it was announced that they had taken Singapore. Now this city was a mighty bastion of the British Empire, and its loss was a fearful blow to our allies. The night it occurred, the announcement was made by radio, and then this dramatic statement came from the announcer: "Ladies and gentlemen, Singapore has fallen, but the Rock of Ages still stands." Yes, thank God, when unbelievers, infidels, skeptics, and all other opponents of the Lord God and his Holy Word have done their worst to destroy or undermine confidence in Divine truth, faith may triumphantly affirm "the Rock of Ages still stands." You can be sure of God!

The Wisdom of Worship

For one thing, worship reminds us: it reminds us of the spiritual and the eternal. The world is so much with us; its pressures are upon us; its demands are insistent. The world of sense is so real while the world of spirit seems so unreal. Things are obvious and present. We feel them, see them, and hear them. And big things often appear to be small while small things seem to be big. We are all subject to the tyranny of trifles. Sir Edmund Burke once said, "What shadows we are and what shadows we pursue." We easily forget that reality is beyond those shadows. There is a spiritual world as real as this one and more so. And worship sets things in their proper perspective. It serves to make us conscious of this invisible world. It reminds us that life is more, much more than eating and drinking, more than

buying and selling. While man has a body, man himself is a soul.

One time when an army had surrounded the town of Dothan so God's man Elisha could not escape, his servant saw the encircling hosts of Syria. He nearly had heart failure. Rushing back to his master, he cried, "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" (2 Kings 6:15) What will become of us? Surely this is the end! But Elisha prayed and asked the Lord to open the eyes of the servant, and when he did he saw "the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." (Verse I7) Brethren, if we don't see more than we do see, we haven't seen all there is to see. If we don't hear more than we do hear, we haven't heard all there is to hear.

Jesus tells of a man who had grandiose plans for expansion. He laid his plans well. All seemed to be going smoothly. But a voice said, "Thou fool." And all his plans were knocked into a cocked hat by the Forgotten, the Invisible Factor in life: God! And God is the great Reality, but it is so easy to forget him. However, worship reminds us of God and that he will have the last word; that nothing is finished until he gets through with it.

Again, observe that worship rebukes us. After following the Lord's instructions to "launch out into the deep and let down your nets," Simon Peter was so overwhelmed, not only by the multitude of fish he had caught, but by the Divine presence, that he fell at Jesus' feet and said, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." (Luke 5:8) Jesus was at once the cause of his agony and the source of his ecstasy. The Lord's holiness and power frightened him, but at the same time fascinated him. He was repelled but also compelled.

One Monday morning a man was ushered into my study. His face was tense and his voice was harsh as he said, "I could kill you." (I thought for a few moments that was exactly what he was going to do.) Naturally, I tried to pacify him, because while heaven is my home I was not homesick just then! I knew the man, who had a responsible job in our city. When I asked him why he wanted to kill me, he said, "You pointed your finger right at me in all that crowd yesterday and told me publicly about my sin." Well, he didn't kill me, but he actually broke down and wept his way back to God. The hour of worship had been used to rebuke him and arouse his conscience and bring him face to face with his sin. And so this man got a treatment although he did not get a treat!

Did mortal man ever suffer more than Job? He was dazed and amazed by his afflictions. He seemed unable to find God. He searched for him before and behind; backward and forward: on the left hand and the right, but God seemed nowhere to be found. Job protested his innocence. He didn't deserve such treatment, such trouble, such affliction! And then God asked Job at least sixty questions. (chapters 38-40) Job was overwhelmed. It was examination time. What could he say? He didn't have the answers. So he simply cried, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now, mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42:5f) And in that hour of prostration, yes and worship, he felt rebuked and condemned. And as we see the gulf between what we are and what we ought to be, and in our best moments what we really want to be, we are ashamed to come before him; yet on the other hand, we are compelled to come before him because he alone is our hope and salvation. Only he has the words of eternal life.

It is related that Stanley Arnot was seeking to bring the Gospel to the natives of darkest Africa many years ago. Just before going into a village where a white man had never been seen, he knelt with his carriers on a small eminence and committed them all to the Lord. Picking up their baggage, they proceeded into the village, where they immediately were surrounded by the excited black people. He put his baggage around him, so he would have a small place to stand unmolested. But a little black fellow crowded in close, took his hand, turned it over and over, then asked in a dialect Arnot understood, "Tell me the name of the river where you washed your hands so white." Thank God there is a "river" where our sins may be washed away. It is the "fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains." This leads us to another "worth" of worship:

Worship restores us. It is curative. It definitely has therapeutic value. Indeed, in Acts 17:25 the word worship is originally translated by our word for "therapy." Yes, true worship renews us, refreshes us and often cures us of many ills. Because occasionally a deranged person dwells in a strange way on religious matters, foolish people jump to the conclusion that religion is responsible for mental unbalance. How foolish! Just the opposite is the case. Jesus told of the prodigal son who left home, turned his back upon his father and all that was near and dear, taking his journey into a "far country." (And that "far country" may be not a question of geography but spirit.) After his harrowing experience, his humiliation and utter failure, we read, "And when he came to himself." Sin has been called insanity and wickedness is utter madness. A course of ungodliness may have an asylum at the end, unless there is genuine repentance. But it isn't religion that drives men to nervous prostration, but the lack of it. This prodigal son was "not himself" while he wandered in the far country, while he kept company with swine and swinish men. He was "out of his mind." But when he "came to himself," when his sense of right and wrong asserted itself; when he saw himself as he really was, then he was restored by repentance. People do not "go crazy" because of religion but because they do not have religion. There is nothing in this world that will give more help to distraught people than the Lord Jesus living in the heart. The disturbed mind, the burdened heart, the sorrowful spirit, the sinful life and often—yes, often—sick bodies all find healing in the "sweet hour of prayer that calls us from a world of care and bids us at our Father's throne make all our wants and wishes known."

Perhaps you recall Isaiah's vision in the sixth chapter of his prophecy. It was the year that King Uzziah died, an event that no doubt left the great prophet disconsolate. He seemed to think the world had caved in on him. The king was dead! What would he do, where would he turn? They had been such good friends. Now he was gone. It was a sad time for Isaiah. Then he went to church. No doubt he had gone before, many times. But something happened this time that was extraordinary, something that was transforming. He saw the Lord, high and lifted up. God was still running the affairs of the nation. Kings might come and go but the Lord remains. He is not dead! Thus Isaiah's worship served to remind him of the invisible and eternal. Following this, he was made conscious of his utter unworthiness, his dreadful uncleanness, and so he cried, "Woe is me for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips . . ." Thus his worship rebuked him, bringing him face to face with the fact that he needed cleansing. It was then that one of the "seraphims" came with a fiery coal, touched his lips and his iniquity was taken away. Thus Isaiah was not only reminded and rebuked at worship, but he was cleansed and restored. Then and only then was he prepared for God's service: "here am I, send me." The process in true worship is always the same: to be reminded, to be rebuked, to be restored, and then we are ready for the work of the Lord.

I played with my blocks, I was but a child,
Houses I builded and castles I piled;
But they tottered and fell, all my labor was vain,
But my father said kindly, "We'll try it again."

I played with my time — what's time to a lad?

Why pore over books? Play, play and be glad!

Till my youth was all spent, like a sweet summer rain,

But my father said kindly, "We'll try it again!"

I played with my soul, the soul that is I,

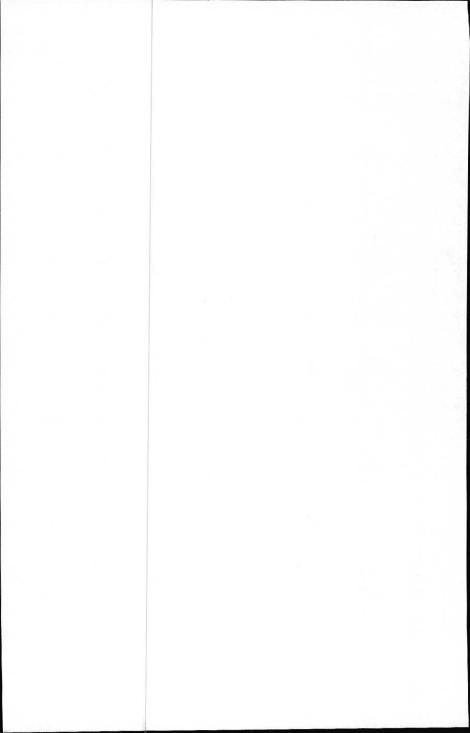
The best that is in me I smothered its cry.

I dulled it, I lulled it, and now, O God, the pain!

But my father said kindly, "We'll try it again!"

Author unknown

The first recorded song



The First Recorded Song

"The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him." Exodus 15:2

Our text is part of a song of transcendent beauty, grandeur and simplicity. While its form may be Egyptian, its content and concept are definitely Hebrew. This is a song of Moses and perhaps the first recorded one in all the Word of God. This does not mean that people didn't sing before Moses' time but we have no record of what they sang. Indeed, I am confident that from time's earliest dawn mothers sang lullabies to their children, and doubtless fathers blended their voices with them.

The occasion of this song was most inspiring. The children of Israel had been led by the strong hand of the Lord

from the slavery of Egypt and were en route to the Promised Land. Coming to the Red Sea, it appeared as if there were no way across. While the rolling waters were before them. the pursuing hosts of Pharaoh were behind them. The situation was desperate, and to the human eye, hopeless. The people began to pray. Moses prayed. They cried unto the Lord. They thought they were going to die. You know, there is something about sickness or personal reverses that will bring a man to his knees. The Psalmist said, "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word." (119:67) Isn't it a pity that so often we have to be brought into trouble, sorrow or sore trial before we really pray? Now that Moses was in a tight place, he cried unto the Lord along with the people. And the Lord answered, "Wherefore criest thou unto me?" In other words, there are times when it is not necessary to pray! When we know the right; fully understand our duty; when we are perfectly conscious of what we should do, there is no use to pray - just do it! "Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." (Ex. 14:15) They obeyed, and as their feet touched the waters, they were divided so there was a dry passageway for them, and they came to the other side; while the Egyptians, assaying to follow, were engulfed in the returning sea and drowned. Safely on the other side, it seems Moses organized an antiphonal chorus with at least two choirs, the men perhaps singing a stanza and the women responding with the refrain. It all reached a musical peroration of adoration and praise to the Lord "for he hath triumphed gloriously."

In the second verse we find a suggestion, at least a partial one, as to what the good Lord can mean to us: "The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation." Although we shall rearrange the order of this verse, three tremendous truths are herein stated.

T.

The Lord is my Salvation. This is the theme song and the golden message of all the Word of God: "The Lord is my salvation." And we all need to be saved for three perfectly valid reasons. First, because we are sinners—all of us—and we have come short of the glory (approval) of God. Second, because all of us will die, if Jesus tarries. We all shall come to the grave where earthly opportunities are gone. Third, because all of us will live evermore, in heaven with our Savior or in hell with the devil and his angels. Here are three simple but impressive reasons why every one of us needs a Savior.

It is related that two English soldiers on furlough during World War II were being guided by Dean Stanley through Westminster Abbey. He pointed out the various markers which indicated the resting place of England's illustrious dead. Presently he made this comment: "Lads, you may never do anything great enough for you to be buried here; nor to have your name inscribed in this old church. But I tell you of an honor far more distinguished, and it is to have your name inscribed in the Lamb's book of life, even written there by our Lord and Savior." Wisely and well spoke the dean, for more than anything else that is the need of this world, and of every life. "The Lord is become my salvation," said Moses. This same theme was taken up by Isaiah in the twelfth chapter where the same words are to be found. So this is not only the theme song of the law but also of the prophets. And then in Psalm 118, David uses these identical words "the Lord is my salvation." So the law, the prophets and the Psalms write as with one voice to speak of man's greatest need and God's greatest gift.

This is what Jonah meant when he said "salvation is of the Lord." This is what Simon Peter meant when he said: "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (I Peter 1:18) "The Lord is my salvation" and I rejoice in the knowledge not only that there is a Savior, but that he is my Savior. And I use the personal pronoun because there came a time years ago when into my boyish heart he came with the fulness of his grace, with the forgiveness of his mercy and the love of his heart. And throughout the years, and even now, I am able to say with grateful heart, "The Lord is my salvation." Can you say that?

A few years ago a Filipino registered at a hotel in one of our Northern cities. He could scarcely speak a word in English. One morning he took a walk in the downtown section, and turning a few corners became hopelessly confused and lost. He tried to make inquiry, but people just stared at him and passed on. Because his knowledge was so limited, he seemed unable to make anyone understand that he was lost. He walked around for several hours and finally, in exhaustion, registered at another hotel, without any luggage. Now it so happened that this hotel was only a few doors from the one where he was originally stopping, but he didn't know it. It is said that he actually stayed five days in this other hotel. The poor lad kept walking around trying to find the place where he had registered in the first place. At last in desperation he began talking to a policeman and finally, thinking of the hotel key he had in his pocket but had forgotten until then, he was brought by the kindly officer to his chosen hotel.

Now there are many people trying to find their way spiritually by themselves. They are resorting to all sorts of notions and ideas and religious vagaries to gain the peace of God and His divine favor. Burning candles, doing without certain food on certain days, engaging in all sorts of rites, rituals and ceremonies, while it is clear as day "the Lord is our salvation." One time a convinced jailer asked Paul, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30) The reply was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Yes, he is our hope, our only hope: "there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

A woman who was greatly concerned about her spiritual life persuaded a neighborhood minister to come and give her the Lord's Supper (sacrament, as he called it). After partaking of it she said to a friend, "I thought it would make me feel better." Her more spiritually wise friend replied: "It is not 'it' that you need but HIM, the Lord Jesus." And that is precisely the need of every life now.

And not only is he necessary, but he is a willing Savior. The constantly repeated emphasis of the Scriptures is that He is willing and able to save to the uttermost (fully, completely and absolutely) those who come unto God by him (Heb. 7:25) and the prophet Ezequiel plaintly declares, "As I live saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil way, for why will ye die . . .?" (33:11)

On one occasion a famous scientist was asked, "What has been your greatest discovery?" He replied, "It is that I have a personal Savior." No greater discovery can any man make than that, and to be able to say "The Lord is my salvation." Can you say that?

II.

The Lord is my strength. He is the strength of our physical life, our mental life and our moral life. Some years ago a letter was received by the superintendent of one of our state hospitals asking him the connection between religion and insanity. Out of wide experience he made reply in about these words: We have two inmates in our hospital whose religion might have some connection with their mental condition. From their predisposition to insanity, however, I am confident they would have been insane on any other subject. But, he added, if you had asked me how many people in this state have been saved from insanity by the religion of Jesus Christ, I would have answered a vast multitude. For, he continued, were it not for our Lord, we would have to more than double the capacity of all our state institutions. Now this experienced man was testifying to that which ministers have been trying to say through the years. The most stabilizing and strengthening factor in any life is to know that our strength is from the Lord our God. "He is the strength of my life," said the Psalmist; "God is our refuge and strength"; "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." "The Lord is my strength," said Moses, and so say many others even in this generation.

Infinite resources are placed at the disposal of a trusting soul. I wish we could believe it and walk in the truth of it and live in the light of it and be bold in the presence of it and be persuaded by the magnificence of it and never doubt it! "The Lord is my Strength."

A friend of mine was telling of an experience with a couple who had come to get married. He said he talked with them, asking various questions and giving them words of counsel. Then he asked the couple to stand. The young woman stood up but the young man kept his seat. He spoke to the man again, but he still remained seated. It became very embarrassing. He asked the young woman if she wanted to get married and she said "yes." When he asked the young

man, he also said "yes." The minister then urged him to stand up beside the young woman. He then said, "I am afraid." "Don't you love this woman?" asked the preacher. "Yes, I do," he replied, but added, "I am afraid I might not love her five years from now." (If I had been that girl I would have walked out on him right then.) Now I often press the claims of Christ upon some lingering, hesitating soul, and the reply is given, "I am afraid I can't hold out." Of course you can't. In our own strength we would never make it. But our salvation rests upon a more secure foundation than our variable feelings or our many weaknesses. The strong arm of the Lord carries us through. We are "kept by the power of God." (I Peter 1:5) "He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. 1:6) And he is "able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." (Jude 24)

III.

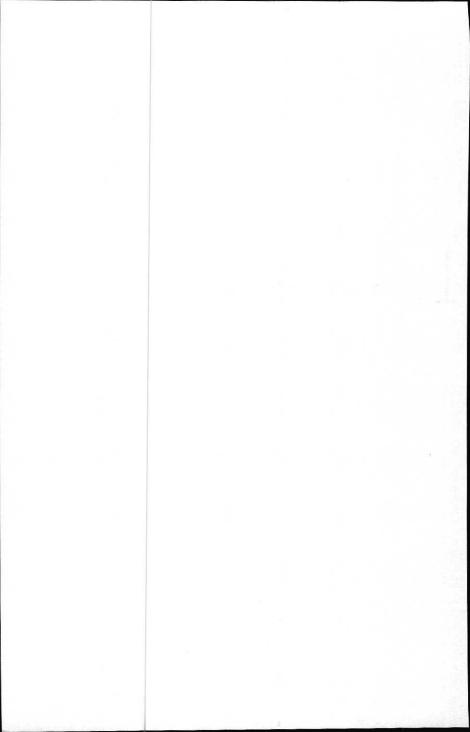
The Lord is my Song. When we open our hearts to receive him genuinely, repentantly and trustingly, he takes the burden away — the burden of sin and guilt and conscience — and leaves us with gladsome praise. We then can say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities . . ." (Ps. 103:1-3)

I was in a city-wide evangelistic meeting in one of our Southern cities. One hundred churches were sponsoring it, and it was being held in the municipal auditorium. I stood one night in the wings, listening to the music of the great choir. One of the pastors sought me out and said, "There is a man here tonight for whom I am burdened. He is the

most popular radio entertainer in this entire section of the state. His program is sponsored by a beer company. I want you to preach to that man." Well, I tried to preach to everyone there, but kept this man in my heart. When I gave the invitation, among others who came forward in public profession was this man. He wasn't satisfied to sit on one of the front seats but got down on his knees. Several of the ministers gathered around him as we continued to sing. Presently he stood up and began shaking hands with the preachers. I stopped the choir and before that great audience called this man to the platform and put him before that battery of microphones and said, "I want you to tell these people what the Lord has done for you tonight." And he said something like this: Last night I left these services with a terrible burden. I went home but not to sleep. At one o'clock this morning I got up and dressed and told my wife I had to get relief from the burden that was crushing the life out of me. I went to a tavern but of course got no relief there. I could hardly wait until daylight to see a preacher I felt could help me. I went to his house around six o'clock, woke him up and asked him to pray for me. He did, but I told him the burden was still there. He prayed again and then read some Scriptures and insisted I pray for myself. I didn't know much about prayer, but I tried, and just asked the Lord to have mercy on my soul. "And, ladies and gentlemen, I am before you tonight as one from whose heart the good Lord has taken the burden of sin, and in its place he has left me a song."

Perhaps even now some sin-burdened heart will have the same experience, and be able to say "the Lord is my strength and song and he is become my salvation."

I am a millionaire



I Am a Millionaire

"Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

I Corinthians 3:21-23

Some time ago I was informed that I had inherited several million dollars. At least, that was a rumor which a friend repeated to me. Of course, it provoked a smile on my part, and the elect lady said, "If it were true, he has been very successful in keeping it from me."

Well, at any rate, it was an interesting rumor without any particular ill effects. No, I didn't inherit a million dollars two or three weeks ago, nor two or three months ago, nor two or three years ago, nor twenty years ago. In fact, I never did. And so far as I know, I haven't the faintest idea of anybody's leaving me a dollar, unless some distant relative, of whom I now have no knowledge, should suddenly appear on the horizon and have compassion on me.

But while I did not inherit a million dollars, nor even a portion thereof, I nevertheless feel that I am a very wealthy man. Unfortunately, we have the mistaken idea that the only wealth is material—silver and gold, houses and lands, stocks and bonds. That it is a mistaken notion we recognize in our better moments, but for the most part we don't live as if we believed it. We seem to think the only thing that is really valuable is something we can taste, or smell, or hear, or touch, or handle. And we forget the intangibles of life, the imponderables, the invisibles, which ultimately will be seen to constitute our abiding riches.

It is a common error to think that when one becomes a Christian he gives up everything worth having and receives very little in return. But the real truth is that when one becomes a Christian, he gives up nothing worth having and receives everything that makes life worth living, here and hereafter.

One reason why we Christians are not happier, and stronger, and more buoyant, and do not have a more radiant influence upon those around us is that we live as if we were paupers rather than as children of the King. We live as if there were no companionship, no friendship, and no victory possible in this present world. We don't really appreciate who we are and what we have.

Now, according to this text, "All things are yours." That sounds as if Paul were playing a joke on us. Would you consider this a rhetorical statement or poetic license? Would you say that he is simply giving expression to an exuberant spirit in a moment of high religious ecstasy? Or is it really true? "All things are yours!"

"Oh, yeah?" says some man today. "I can think of a lot of things I don't have." Well, that's true. We often feel like that man who said he had worked all his life for food and clothes. "And now," he said, "the food doesn't agree with me and the clothes don't fit me." Well, that happens to people sometimes in the course of the years.

You say, "I can make a long list of things that I don't have." Nevertheless, let us remind ourselves that if we belong to Christ, that is the turning point; that is the pivot; that is the secret of the interpretation—if you belong to Christ.

Everybody has heard of William Booth, the notable founder of the Salvation Army. Someone asked him what he considered the secret of the blessings of God which had been so abundantly showered upon him. And he made this reply: "A long time ago I made up my mind that God would have all there was of William Booth." Now, William Booth gave himself to the Lord, and in that proportion the Lord gave himself fully to William Booth. We possess all things, as we are possessed of Jesus Christ. To those who are Christ's, "all things are yours."

And then the apostle begins to delineate some of those "all things," and we wish to think of them just a few moments with the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

First of all, we are told that the ministry is ours. Perhaps some people wouldn't think that was too great a source of wealth. A lot of people don't. Paul considered it so. He said, "The ministry is yours." Paul, and Apollos, and Cephas, the ministry all belongs to you. An unfortunate condition prevailed in this "First Baptist Church" of Corinth. The people had a falling out over preachers. They had a fuss over them. Of course, we preachers are accustomed to being fussed *at*, but we are not accustomed to being fussed *over*. But they were fussing *over* the preachers!

I can easily imagine someone in the church saying, "I like the strong doctrinal meat of the apostle Paul; that's the kind of preaching I like." Somebody else said, "No, for me, I like Apollos with his eloquence and his oratorical flights. He lifts me up to the heavens and gives wings to my spirit. I like that." And some dear sister spoke up and said, "Oh I like Simon Peter; he makes me cry. I like that!"

Now Paul said, "They are all yours; all belong to you. Everything about them was given for your benefit. Whether it is the strong doctrinal meat I give you, or the beautiful eloquence of Apollos, or the emotional upsurges of Simon Peter, we all belong to you. Take your fill, it is all yours."

You see, God has been pleased in every day and generation to select and elect certain men to lead his people. That has been his plan. That is his plan today. Now these men whom God has so called may not have been better than those they have led, but it has been God's purpose to set them apart to declare his message and to keep alive his witness in the earth. To repudiate God's messenger, to repudiate God's message, is to repudiate God himself. And I am on solid Bible ground when I say that. God Almighty has always backed, with all of the resources of heaven, his Godsent prophet. Make no mistake about it. When God lays his hand upon any man and impels and propels that man to go forth at his divine, almighty command and in obedience to the Spirit which he puts in that man's heart with a message to the people, God will back that man with all the resources of heaven. And ultimately and essentially, anybody who frustrates or repudiates that message or that messenger will be handled by Almighty God. This is just simple Bible truth that the people of this generation need to know about. Our forefathers preached it, the Bible teaches it; but we today seem to have forgotten it.

Now mark it, I said somebody truly sent of God! An

old Christian writer said, "There are four types of preachers: First, there is the man called of God but not called of men. Second, there is the man called of men but not called of God. Third, there is the man who is called of God and of men. And fourth, there is the man called by neither God nor man." Of course, this is true, and when you analyze it, that explains a lot of things that have puzzled you. Nevertheless, when God calls a man, God calls him to a task, and his task is to lead God's people.

For a number of years there has been a worldwide revolt against spiritual leadership. People will follow political leadership blindly. This has been proven again and again. They will follow social leadership no matter what the cost in character, or in conscience, or in Christian witness. They will follow financial leadership; we see it on every hand. But there has been a Satan-inspired revolt against religious leadership. This in no small measure accounts for the withholding of the blessings of God upon both state and church. Let me remind you that the state is only a divinely appointed instrument of God for the preservation of order in the earth. That is what God's Word tells us. Let us remind ourselves also that God's church is likewise of divine appointment. This does not mean that all of the affairs of the state are approved of God nor that everything that the church does is pleasing in his sight. But as institutions civil, recognized civil authority, and recognized religious authority, such as in Christ's church - both have had their origin in the heart of God. The leaders of the state and of the church are responsible to God; they are accountable to God. And that being the case, God expects the people to listen to the voice of his religious prophet as He does to the political and social prophets.

And yet, so often the whole world listens to the one and pays no attention to the other. And I say that this ac-

counts in no small measure for the fact that many of the blessings of God are not upon the state nor upon the church.

The Lord can give no greater honor to any man than to call him into the gospel ministry. He can give no greater blessing to any church than a divinely sent minister to be their spiritual leader. Many of us who have responded to this call have a feeling of terrible and painful unworthiness and also a feeling of unspeakable inadequacy. But at the same time we are like the great apostle when he said, "Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel!" It is like fire in the bones. One can do nothing else but obey a voice which he has heard, follow the hand that beckons him on, and respond to the Spirit of God that compels him. So help him God, he can do nothing else!

Despite the jeers and the sneers of worldly-minded, money-grabbing, unconverted church members, and despite the scoffings of unbelievers, the fact remains that God-called ministers have been the leaders of the moral forces in every community since the beginning of time. And our churches, our schools, our hospitals, and our orphanages, from a human standpoint, owe their very origin to the labors, and the lives, and the toils, and the preaching, and the inspiration that they have been able to bring. Only he who has eyes to see will appreciate this, but it is true just the same.

Who was it that opened darkest Africa with its unlimited wealth? The slave traders? They just skirted the coasts with their vessels and captured the poor unfortunates in the seaside villages. Did they go into the heart of darkest Africa with its lurking dangers and its possible death? Oh, no! Who was it that marched into Africa on foot, carrying a lighted torch of truth, proclaiming the one true and living God, and thereby blazed a trail whereby commerce came and business came and economic exploitation came? Who

was it who did it? It was an humble Baptist preacher by the name of Livingstone.

Who went into the heart of Burma, and opened Burma, and lighted the torch that still shines today, even though its flame may seem to flicker? Who was it that went into India? Who was it that gave the inspiration out of which has come that seething mass of unrest, the cravings that they themselves don't understand, the desire to be somebody in the world of nations? Who was it? A Baptist preacher by the name of William Carey, followed by Adoniram Judson. "But I thought it was the traders who went in and opened it up." Oh, no, the traders followed them. Sure! As the missionaries went in and converted the nations, so the people wouldn't cut the heads off those traders, the traders said, "We want your ivory; we want your gold." And many times these very traders turned their backs and lifted their scorn against the men who made it possible for them to get in.

Who went into the South Sea, the cannibal-infested islands, and preached Christ to those head-hunters until they turned away from their pagan practices and believed what the missionary said? Humble preachers. And many a soldier during World War II who found relief and refuge on one of those South Sea Islands has thanked God again and again that somebody had the courage, physical courage as well as moral courage, to go into the midst of what seemed to be certain death because God said go. And then the traders came: "We want your ivory; we want your gold; we want your rubber."

And in the face of all this evidence of God's blessing and leadership, there is a worldwide satanic revolt against religious and spiritual leadership in the state, and sometimes, God forgive us, in the church.

I never really had but one pastor. He is old now, aged

and retired, living in Florida. I wrote him a letter the other day, just a letter to let him know that I had not forgotten him. I signed the letter, "Your son in the ministry." I received his reply in letters which could hardly be deciphered. His hand was evidently very feeble. He said, "I like that — 'your son in the ministry."

As a boy, following the example of a godly father and mother, assisted by faithful Sunday school teachers (and God bless them today), I was led to the Lord Jesus by my pastor. He baptized me, and then later he performed my marriage ceremony. One time he stood in the hour of sorrow and spoke words of comfort to our hearts. It is only natural that I should have in my heart a feeling of thanksgiving to God.

Last night I went for a walk. It was about eleven o'clock and very quiet in the neighborhood. Everybody seemed to have retired. As I walked along, I lifted up my eyes to the sky, so beautiful and calm, undisturbed by man's hatred and frictions and strifes. The thought came to me, "Dear God, I am so glad that down through the years you have laid your hands upon this one and that one and the other one, and you have sent them forth into the world, ofttimes misunderstood, but ofttimes greatly loved by the people. You have sent them into the world. I wish to lift my face unto thee tonight and say, 'Thank thee, Lord, for the ministry.' I thank thee, Lord."

And Paul said, "It is all yours." He said it for you. You are rich! You're a millionaire! Do you know it? Thank God for the ministry and the wealth of it today. But he goes on to say that the world is yours. That sounds like a joke also, doesn't it? The world is ours? He wasn't talking about the world of commerce, business, and corruption, but the world in which we live and move and have our being. "That world is yours," he said, "if you have Christ."

What does he mean by that? Let me ask you. Who owns the land? The man who has the deed recorded in his name, or the man who can appreciate the landscape? Who really owns it? Who is it that really owns the sky, that starry vault that I was talking about? Who owns it? The man who has the largest amount of money in the bank? No! The man who sees behind every star an angel, and who hears in the soft sigh of the wind the voice of God - he owns it! Who is it that owns all of that magnificent art in the home of the man who has bought the lovely paintings and displayed his culture? Does he own them? No! The man who comes to see them and says, "What beautiful colors, what lovely design, what marvelous artistry!" and then looks with eyes that are knowing. He it is who really owns those pictures. Who is it that owns the music, the soul-thrilling music of the world? Is it he who is able to pay for a ticket of admission? No! But he who is able to say, when he hears it, "My soul has wings; my spirit is in rapturous flight." He is the one who owns the music.

For to those who are Christ's, the light is the smile of God; the rain is the tears of God; the fruit and the flowers are the blessing of God; the morning is the trumpet of God. The world is his. That's right, the world is his; and it belongs to you if you belong to Christ.

Paul goes on to say, "Life is yours." What a statement! Life with its opportunities, its friendships, its companionships, with its glorious opening doors and widening horizons and luring vistas—life, rich, precious life is yours.

zons and luring vistas — life, rich, precious life is yours.

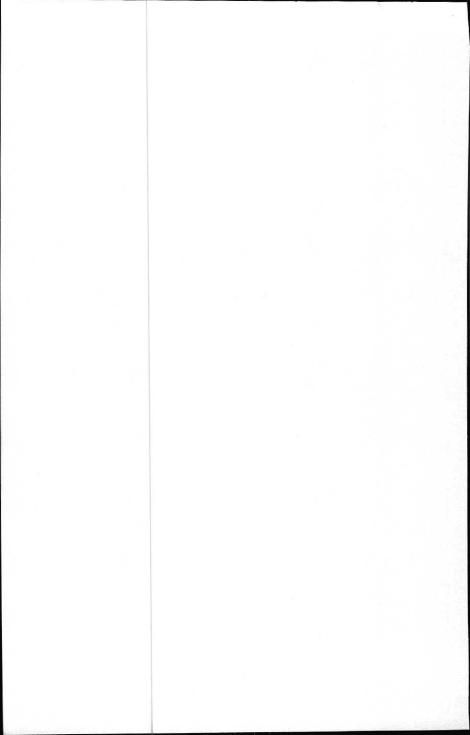
Jesus said, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome." You can't find life worth living; you must make it worth living. "I have overcome." What did he mean by that? Why, he owned the world. But you say, "It didn't look like it. They put him on a cross." But he owned the world just the same. How did he overcome it? He overcame hatred by love, and

thereby he gained the world. He overcame injustice by righteousness, and thereby he gained the world. He overcame misery by mercy, and thereby he gained the world. He overcame evil by doing good, and thereby the world was his. And people talk about him today, read his Book today, pray in his name today, bow down before him today, worship him today, sing praises unto him today, all because he gained the world. And the same methods which Jesus used to gain the world are available to you and me today.

Life is yours, he says; all things present are yours; all things to come are yours, even death. It is all yours. Death is not the end; it is only the beginning. It is not the master of the house—only the porter that opens the gate. You cannot command it; you know what is going to happen after it. If you are Christ's, you need not be afraid. It is yours, I tell you, an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation which is to be revealed at the last time. For eye has not seen nor ear heard what God has prepared for those who love him.

"Now are we the sons of God . . . it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (I John 3:2) That is enough for time; that is enough for eternity. That is enough!

 $\mathbf{T}_{ ext{HE HOME THAT PLEASES GOD}}$



The Home That Pleases God

"The thoughts of the righteous are right; but the counsels of the wicked are deceit. The words of the wicked are to lie in wait for blood; but the mouth of the upright shall deliver them. The wicked are overthown and are not, but the house of the righteous shall stand." Proverbs 12:5-7

(Also read Deuteronomy 6:1-15)

These verses set forth a wide and vivid contrast between the wicked and the righteous, especially in their homes. First, in the matter of thoughts, one being superficial, the other genuine. Second, in the matter of words, one being malicious, the other being beneficent. Third, with respect to their ends; the house of the wicked shall fall, whereas the house of the righteous shall stand. Here is an affirmation that comes from Holy Writ, finds support in the experience

of the ages, and appears today as the declaration of wisdom. Here then is the truth of God: "The house of the righteous shall stand."

Actually, every Christian has three homes; not one, but three. First, there is the home where he lives. Be it ever so humble, to him there is no other place like his home. It is "the father's kingdom, the mother's world, the child's paradise." Second, your church home, the place of public worship and united prayer, the place where you once accepted Christ, received baptism, and have kept on learning about God. Third, the heavenly home, "where no storms ever beat on that glittering strand, while the years of eternity roll."

On this Christian Home Sunday we are to think especially about the first of the three homes, the one where you now live. Nevertheless, the day and the hour call for the interweaving of thoughts about all three of these homes. So let us turn first of all to the ideal purpose of the home that pleases God.

The Purpose of the Home

The purpose of the home, any home, is first of all spiritual. That is, in its beginning, its continuance, and its perpetuation it relates directly to Almighty God. Historically, He inaugurated the home in the Garden of Eden, where everything was lovely and fair. Out of common and unrefined dust of the earth, God made the body of man, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, so that he became a living soul. But in the whole of creation he could not find a helpmate. So God formed and gave to him a woman, to live in a union so intimate and tender that they could no longer be twain, but one flesh.

The home is God's supreme institution. It was first in

time, before the church, before the school, before the state. The home was likewise first in importance, and so it stands today. According to Malachi, the teaching prophet, the Lord God organized the home and placed it here in the world that it might preserve a godly seed. (2:15) To be well born in such a household means to enter life with all sorts of advantages. Hence many of us can say with the Psalmist that we have a goodly heritage (16:6b), which has come from the heart of our infinite God, as the noblest of all His blessings.

In other words, the home is a depository of faith, a trustee, as it were, of divine grace. Thus we begin to see that in its perpetuation, as well as in its inception, the home is definitely related to the eternal purposes of God, under the covenant of His grace. As the Psalmist sings, "One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts." (145:4) Thus the first purpose of the home is spiritual. From age to age in the olden time, the godly home served as the channel of grace until it brought forth the Birth of our Lord. Since then the Christian home has served as the channel of divine love, and will continue to do so until the Lord Jesus comes again, this time in glory.

The second purpose of the home is biological, or domestic. The Lord God said: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." (Gen. 1:28a) How definite and how specific a divine injunction! In the home, life is not created, but through the home, life is transmitted. In the home, as everywhere else, all of life comes from God, and ever for His glory. Even the most godly parents are not the authors of life in their little ones. Parents are the transmitters of such life, and then its guardians. Any two parents can choose their occupation and their neighborhood. The two may decide to live in the country, in the town, or in the city. Whatever other choices may lie before

him, no one can select the family in which he is born. Of necessity, every man or woman anywhere must belong to some family. As the Scripture says, "God setteth the solitary in families." (Ps. 68:6)

The third purpose of the home is educational. Someone has called it "the seminary of all institutions." Certainly it is the chief school of human virtues. In fact, the home is a sort of microcosm in which we mortals can display all the techniques of our culture, our development, and growth. Here in the home we have both heredity and environment, both freedom and responsibility, both authority and discipline. These are the techniques by which all of us grow. According to the teachings of the Bible, we are to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; that is, with the sort of instruction and discipline that is pleasing to God. We are to teach them the things of God and the truths of the Bible. We are to train them in the ways of God and in obedience to His laws. All of this we are to do in the home that pleases God.

So the Christian home is not so much a place as it is a spirit, a dream, an ideal. It is to be a sort of private university in which the lessons of life are both taught and learned, from parents who themselves are taught of God. What a lofty ideal of the home that pleases Him!

The Power of the Home

In the second place, notice the power of such a Christian home. The beginning of every honored institution on earth is at the family hearth. The roots of state and local government reach back into the home. The concepts of theoretical ethics and practical morals all have their derivation in the home. The resulting attitudes toward life and all its relationships come from the home.

To be more concrete, the first nursery was a home. The first school was a home. The first hospital was a home. The first manufacturing establishment was in a home. And the first religious society was organized in the unecclesiastical atmosphere of a home dedicated to God.

The power of the home today appears especially in three areas: national, social, and spiritual. Nationally, the home is our first line of defense. Not in our armies and navies, our airplanes and submarines, our bombs and missiles, however necessary and vital these may be, but in homes pleasing to God is the first line of our national defense. The integrity and the durability, the morality and the sobriety of any nation are determined and directed, molded and modified by the influence of its homes. Here in our own land, we as a nation can never rise above the spiritual level of our homes.

The presence or the absence of homes pleasing to God will go far to determine the future weal or woe of any people. Those who seek to elevate and dignify, to purify and sanctify the homes of our nation are doing more, as they have done more, and will do more for the welfare of our nation, for its permanence, and for its final glory, than all of our statesmen who have ever lived. Nationally, this is where we who believe in God can do more to make life count for good than in any other area. Once again, what an ideal for our country!

Socially, the home serves as the training ground for all of life's relationships. The first impression a child gets about marriage comes from his own father and mother. Here, as in everything else, the home is the mold of character. It is the mold that goes far to determine what shall be the future of society. What we permit our little children to see and to hear in our home, what we put into their thought streams

today will go far toward determining their life streams tomorrow.

In Vermont, a well-known rural pastor and author, Arthur W. Hewitt, says that one day after church he took a high school girl to her home. The road skirted a beautiful lake. "Presently," he says, "at her request I stopped before what appeared to be little more than a shack." Seeing the look of surprise on my face, she said, rather apologetically, and yet defensively: "I know it's not much to look at, but it's a wonderful place to see from!" That's what our homes ought to be! They ought to be wonderful places to see from. Indeed, they do give us visions. They give us visions of other lands, of other peoples, and of other races. They also give us visions of things not so far away. The home is the window through which we get our first glimpse of all our social obligations and privileges. What a wonderful place to see from!

So much for the ideal. What are the facts? Class hatred, race enmity, political corruption—all of these perils are either properly resolved or else tragically aggravated by the influence of the home. Not long ago a certain man boasted, "I am a hundred per cent American!" Another man replied, "I'll go you one better! I'm a two hundred per cent American! I hate everybody!" He had imbibed that hellish philosophy because he had been brought up in a so-called home full of hatred and prejudice, with a spirit of exclusiveness and other such attitudes inimical to everything that the Word of God teaches about a home that pleases God because of its power for good.

The power of the ideal home is spiritual. Behind all and beyond all, beneath all and above all, the power of the home appears at its best in the realm of eternal values. When the mind of the little child is filled with the truth of God, when the heart of the little child is filled with the

love of God, and when the life of the little child is directed toward doing the will of God, then within that heart and life have been created impressions, habits, and ideals that will never die.

"I tried to be an atheist," said a certain man not long ago, "but every time I reached the point where I was ready to renounce my faith, I seemed again to feel my mother's hand on my head, and to hear her prayer that I had heard a hundred times, 'God bless and keep my boy!' From the prayers of that godly mother the grown son could never get away.

After Reuben A. Torrey had become a widely known evangelist, he made the following statement: "I grew up in a godly home, but I was ungodly. I reached young manhood ungodly, unsaved, careless about the things of the soul. And then I went away from home, an unsaved man. But I went away with my mother's words ringing in my ears, 'Reuben, when the way is dark, son, call upon God, call upon God!'

"I wandered far, farther than I had ever dreamed that I could wander. Then one night in a hotel room I planned to commit suicide. As I made all the preparations, there came flashing into my mind the words of my darling mother. 'Reuben, when the hour is dark, son, call upon God, call upon God!' Then in the depths of despair in my hotel room I knelt by my bed and called upon God. And instead of taking my own life, I gave my life to the Lord Iesus."

No child will forever get away from the influence of a Christian mother or a Christian father. Never!

The Protection of the Home

Now let us observe the protection of the home. Before

the turn of the century, a man and his wife with their little son went from Seattle into the Klondike, seeking gold. The parents found gold, and became wealthy, immensely wealthy. But their son was killed. Eventually, the two returned by steamer to Seattle. There they met with reporters who had heard about their fabulous wealth. As the father and mother walked down the gangplank, one of the reporters called out, "Did you get the gold? Did you get the gold?" "Yes, we got the gold, but we lost our boy."

What shall it profit father and mother if they gain the whole world and lose their own son? Success anywhere else—in the school or in the state, in the arts or in the sciences, even in the church and in other work for the Kingdom of God—success anywhere else can never begin to compensate for failure with the children in the home. That's the biggest failure of all! That's where our Lord calls on us Christians to lay up heavenly treasures while we are still on earth.

Every living thing in the world has its enemy: the grass of the field and the tree in the forest, the fowl of the air and the fish in the sea. To this rule the home is no exception. By day and by night, in summer's heat and in winter's cold, in prosperity and in adversity, a thousand enemies assault our household. These ever-present foes are both external and internal. There are pressures from without, pressures to conform with the patterns of a society that are utterly contrary to the ideals of God's Written Word. And there are internal enemies: friction and strife, with emotional immaturity and increasing incompatibility. The enemies of the home include dirt, debt, and the devil. All such things are constantly warring against the security of the household.

Well, have we any protection? Do we have any safeguards? Or are we left helpless? Not at all! Warm Christian love that flows from the sanctified hearts of father and mother, sympathetic understanding, mutual respect of the other's personality, patience and forbearance, with mutual exchange of confidence — these are only a few of the battlements that protect the Christian home today. According to the Apostle Paul, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (or self control); against such there is no law." (Gal. 5:22)

Most of all let me emphasize discipline as a protective battlement of the godly home. This matter of discipline is never easy, nor is it ever so simple as we sometimes suppose. Anarchy is not born solely in back alleys. Hoodlumism does not originate only in slums. Make no mistake about it! Anarchy and hoodlumism, with juvenile delinquency and all the evil train that afflicts and curses our society today—all of these come out of homes, homes that do not exercise authority and discipline, all in the spirit of Christlike love.

Discipline is not chiefly a matter of where we live. It's far more a matter of the environment and the spirit of the home itself, because if little children do not learn self-control and obedience while in the home, they will almost surely be out of control the rest of their lives. For a striking illustration turn to the Bible facts about Adonijah. This little-known son of King David staged a rebellion against his father. We wonder how the son could be guilty of such filial disrespect and open disloyalty. But from the Bible record we learn what lay back of that young man's rebellion. According to Moffatt's *Translation*, "His father had never checked him all his life, by asking what he meant by his conduct." (I Kings 1:6) "Also," the record adds, "he was a very handsome fellow."

That is the Bible's explanation of the anarchy, the

hoodlumism, and the rebellion of handsome, spoiled young Adonijah. Not even once did his father check up on him, or correct him. And as a consequence, death to the son, with sorrow to the father. What would you say to a young man if he asked you what one young fellow asked me? "The Bible teaches me that I am to honor my father and my mother?" "Yes," I replied. "All right, I want you to tell me how I can honor my father who is a drunkard? How can I honor my mother who is impure?" What would you have said? What could I say?

What would you tell a little boy who played with your little lad and other neighborhood boys, but always somewhere else, and never in his own backyard. One day he felt so keenly about it all that he told another little fellow: "I'd be glad to invite you over to my house, but my mother stays so full of beer that I don't know what she might do or say." How would you counsel a stalwart, upstanding young man, the son of a Baptist minister? The son said: "In the church my father talks like a saint, but in our home he acts like the devil."

This matter of discipline must begin with the parents. First they must learn self-control. It's high-stepping and high-kicking, cocktail-drinking and drunken-carousing parents who account for much of the misery in America. Under God, what can you expect from children who see their parents guzzling liquor, desecrating the Lord's Day, reading sex magazines, and doing God only knows what else? We older folk cannot "kid the kids!" They know

We older folk cannot "kid the kids!" They know whether or not we're on the level. They know whether or not we really love God; whether or not we really believe the Bible; whether or not we really are loyal to the home and church. And when they see us repeatedly acting contrary to the Spirit of Christ, they soon catch on. Today, dear God, what a harvest we are reaping!

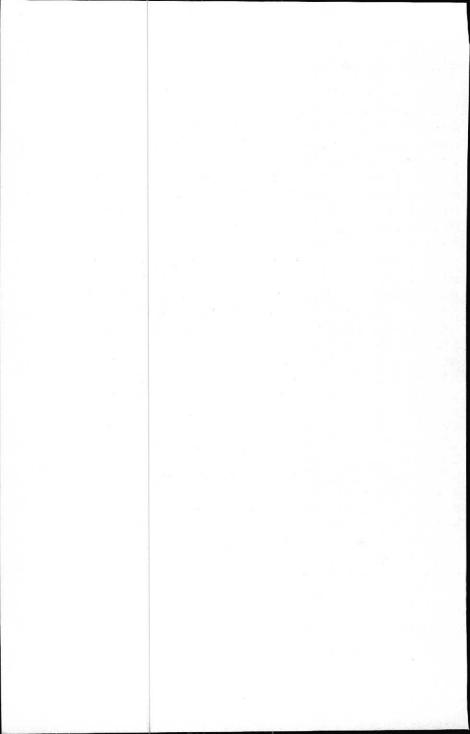
The Paradise of the Home

Now at the last let us consider the paradise of the home. In the old Greek language the word for home signified a shrine for the gods. In the Christian meaning of the term that's exactly what the home ought to be today: a place where everybody loves, honors, and obeys the Heavenly Father. When by God's grace a home becomes a citadel of faith, love, and worship, that home does indeed become a miniature of paradise, a vestibule to heaven, a foretaste of its glories, and a prophecy of what we shall all enjoy in the Father's home on high.

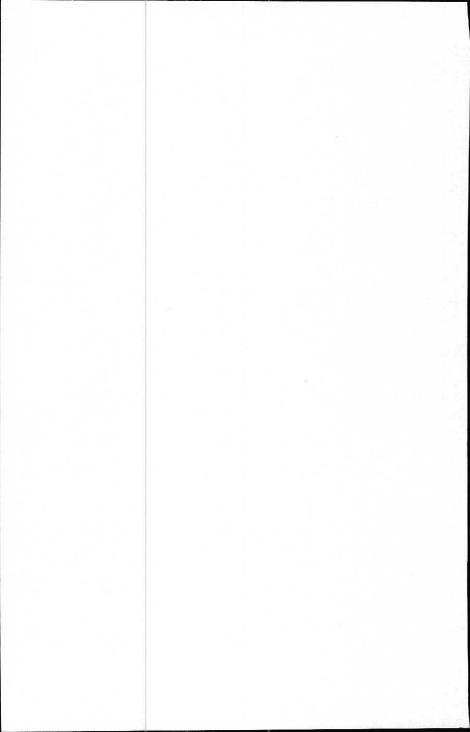
In the noblest of all the chapters in the Bible our Savior has told us: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:2-3) According to another version, "In my Father's house are many rooms," with a room in heaven for each of God's redeemed children.

Meanwhile the Living Christ is saying to each person in God's House today: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Rev. 3:20)

My friend, if you wish to have on earth, here and now, a home that pleases God, give yourself now to the Lord Jesus as your Saviour and your Master. Let Him take control of your heart and your home. Then He will guide you in helping to make your home a heaven on earth, where everybody does the will of God, does it gladly and does it well, as it is being done today in the Heavenly Home.



Some superlatives



Some Superlatives

"Unto me, who am less than the last of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

Ephesians 3:8

"Jesus Christ, whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable. . . ."

I Peter 1:8

"But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

I Corinthians 2:9

It is dangerous for a preacher or anyone else to deal in superlatives. Before long he will discover he is dealing in exaggerations and speaking of most everything as being the greatest, the finest, the biggest or the best.

In one of his essays, Emerson claims that superlatives weaken instead of strengthen. Without doubt they are overworked, over-wrought and over-sought. However, when we consider that the original meaning of the word is "that which is of the highest excellence," we approach our subject without fear. Let us consider three Bible superlatives.

Ι

Unsearchable Riches (Eph. 3:8)

Not only unfindable but unsearchable. As though one were told that in addition to precious jewels taken from earthly mines that dazzle and allure, the planets, galaxies and stars of the sky are encrusted and decorated with gems utterly beyond our fairest dreams. For although we have discovered something of the riches of Christ, there are other riches that are unsearchable.

This word "unsearchable" has several other translations: first, "exhaustless." So the text might well read "the exhaustless riches of Christ." (Weymouth) Not like the abandoned mines of earth—barren and empty—but as Dr. Jowett once said, "as if a miner working away on a vein of ore should suddenly discover equally precious veins stretching away on every side, overwhelming him in rich embarrassment."

Second, "fathomless"; so the text might well read "the fathomless riches of Christ" (Moffatt), that is, deeper than the deepest sea. When Nansen was exploring Arctic waters he would keep a record of water depths. One day he let down a line so many fathoms, then wrote the number and

added, "it is deeper than this." The next day he took another and deeper sounding, made his notation and wrote after it, "it is deeper than this." Finally he used all his equipment and yet could not reach the bottom. He made his final notation and added again, "it is deeper than this." We have no plumb lines that will fully reach the immeasurable wealth of Divine grace — redeeming, forgiving, sustaining, directing, cleansing grace! In the presence of such matchless loving-kindness and tender mercy, we find our words utterly inadequate and can only repeat with Paul, "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out." (Rom. 11:33)

Third, the word may be translated "incalculable." So our text might well read, "the incalculable riches of Christ." Expert accountants and auditors and scientists may approximate fabulous sums, and leave us amazed at the vast potential resources of sea and land and sky; but no human mind can possibly conceive nor tongue fully tell the illimitable and eternal and incomprehensible love of God in Christ Jesus.

If we shoul trace the terms of Paul's eulogy through his letters, we would find such expressions as these:

- (1) The riches of his goodness that lead to repentance. (Rom. 2:4) Goodness without spot or stain or blemish.
- (2) The riches of his wisdom. (Rom. 11:33) Wisdom that is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, without hypocrisy.
- (3) The riches of assurance. (Col. 2:2) Assurance that comforts, consoles and unites our hearts to sing his praise.

(4) But best of all, we find the expression, "the riches of His grace." (Eph. 1:7) By which we have redemption, forgiveness through his shed blood.

Returning from Europe, I was walking around the deck of a steamer late one afternoon. It had been a gloomy day with a heavy overcast. Presently my companion seized my arm and cried, "Look! The sun has broken through." And indeed it had. But after taking one glance at the shaft of light shining through the rift in the clouds, I said, "The word you just used is the same word Paul uses in Titus 2:11 when he says 'the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared.'" If Paul had been speaking of water, he would have said "has gushed forth." If he had been speaking of a flower, he would have said "has blossomed out." But in speaking of the Lord Jesus he says "broken through." God "broke through" the clouds of time and space and infinity, and in the person of Jesus Christ we behold his glory "full of grace and truth."

And so we are no longer paupers, groping among beggarly elements, but children of the King, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. We have an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away.

H

Unspeakable Joy (I Peter 1:8)

The word "unspeakable" occurs in two other places: "thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." (II Cor. 9:15) And in II Cor. 12:4 Paul tell us of a man who was caught up into paradise and heard "unspeakable words." An old preacher once said he wished he could have seen three things: Rome in all her glory; Paul at Athens; and Jesus Christ in the flesh. This longing to see Jesus in the

flesh was the motive that prompted the ecclesiastical leaders in other ages to have the great artists cover the walls of cathedrals with their conception of the face of Christ. However, we love the Lord not for his classical features or his symmetrical form, or musical voice, but for his unlimited mercy and stooping grace. Not only for what he did but for what he was and ever shall be.

That which the eyes see and the hands touch may soon become commonplace, trivial and prosaic. What is gained sensually is generally lost spiritually. So long as we are in the flesh, if our Lord were localized, he would lose some of his majesty, divinity and infinity. If there were only one place on earth where I could meet my Master face to face, his presence would not be felt as now, when waking or sleeping, here or there, I know him to be my unfailing comrade. "Blessed are they that have not seen yet have believed." (John 20:29)

"Though now you see him not [that is, in the flesh] yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable." (I Peter 1:8) The ordinary joys of men are like the scum on a stagnant pond, fruit and proof of corruption. Or like the apples of Sodom, attractive without but acrid powder within. Or like a beautiful soap bubble which when broken is only a drop of dirty water. Or like a flower which today is and tomorrow is cast into the oven. But the redeemed of God have a joy earth cannot give nor the grave take away. It is described as "unspeakable."

It has been pointed out that the climax and crown of every emotion is silence. The climax of anger is not the loud voice but the absence of all speech. Thus we often say of an angry man that he is "speechless with rage." The climax of grief is not the wild, uncontrollable cry but a dumbness and numbness that has no voice. The climax of joy is a depth of feeling no words can express. There are

certain noisy groups who are in danger of mistaking uproar for praise and disorder for joy, forgetting that a shallow brook makes more noise than a deep river but carries little merchandise; forgetting that the crackling of burning thorns may attract attention but will surely disappoint a cold pilgrim in search of sustained warmth. But the Christian has joys that originate in the depths of his own being: a peaceful conscience because of the mercy of God; a peaceful heart because of the love of God; a peaceful mind because of the truth of God; and a peaceful soul because of the presence of God.

It is the joy of the prisoner set free; the slave given his liberty. It is the joy of blind eyes opened and deaf ears unstopped. It is the joy of the lost who are found and the dead who are raised to newness of life. And as these joys overflow the heart and soul of the Christian, he is lost in wonder, love and praise. The unspeakable gift is received with unspeakable joy.

III

Unthinkable Glory (I Cor. 2:9)

"Eye hath not seen." But the eye has seen much: the virgin purity of a cloudless dawn; the solemn majesty of a glorious night; the unfolding panorama of purple mountains and verdant valleys; the falling tear that denotes a loving heart; but no eye has seen "what God hath prepared for those who love him."

"Ear has not heard." But the ear has heard much: the cooling sound of a rippling stream; the warming sound of a crackling fire; the pleasing sound of a bird call; the tender sound of a mother's lullaby; the doleful sound of a funeral bell; the comforting sound of a Christian hymn; the inspir-

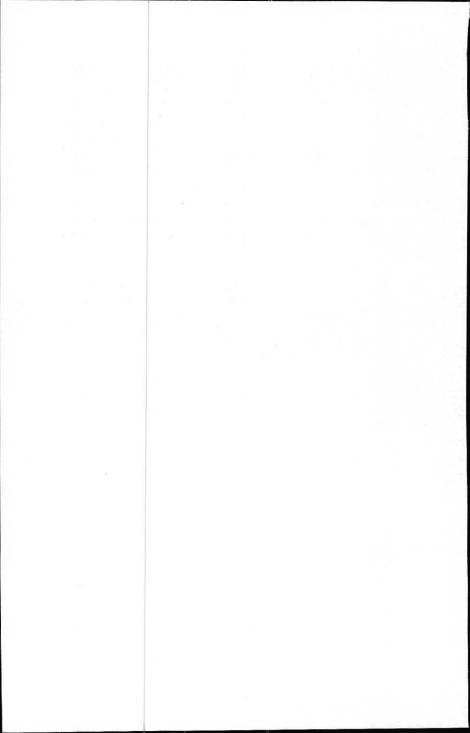
ing sound of a martial air. But no ear has heard "what God has prepared for those who love him."

"Neither have entered in to the heart of man." But oh! How much these hearts have felt and imagined! How they have loved and grieved and rejoiced and hoped! But it has never entered into the heart of man what God has prepared for them that love him. "Unthinkable glory!" "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory." "Beloved, now are we the sons of God and it doth not yet appear what we shall be but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is."

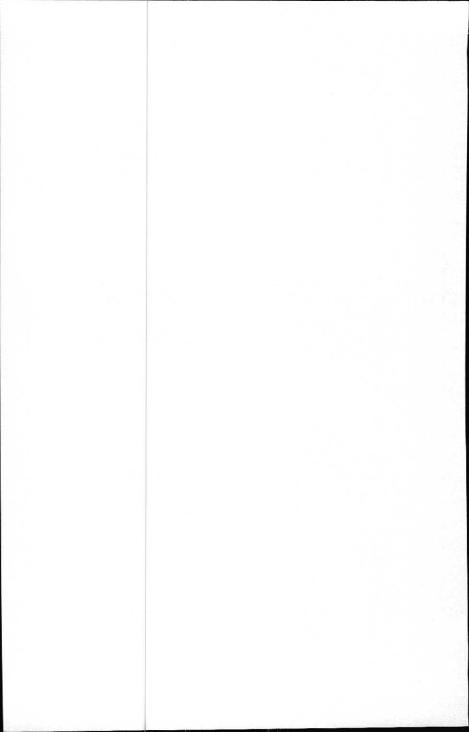
Some day the silver cord will break, And I no more as now shall sing, But oh! the joy when I awake, Within the palace of the King! And I shall see him face to face, And tell the story saved by grace.

- Fanny Crosby

Unsearchable riches, unspeakable joy and unthinkable glory! Amen!



$S_{\text{TRENGTH NEEDED}}$ and SUPPLIED



Strength Needed and Supplied

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

Ephesians 6:10

Dwight L. Moody once said, "If a man is a Christian his dog and cat ought to know about it." In other words, he was saying that true religion should influence every area of life — domestic, social, commercial, and political. "For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things." (I Tim. 4:8) Paul said in Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." Note "I am crucified," therefore there were

some things he wouldn't do. "Nevertheless I live," therefore there were some things he would do. "The life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith. . . ." In other words, what he would not do and what he would do were determined by his Christian faith. That's the way it should be, and here is the answer to every question of Christian conduct, ethics and pleasure.

In chapters five and six of Ephesians Paul frankly and forcefully deals with this entire subject. He has words to say about the relation of husband and wife; and wife and husband; of parent and child, and child and parent; of servant and master, and master and servant. As one seeks to measure up to these sacred obligations and at the same time feels the pressure of evil, the great apostle concludes: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." (Eph. 6:10)

Observe first that strength is needed. Life is a battle, a war, a conflict. The strength needed is not primarily physical or financial but moral, spiritual and heavenly. We need sorely, daily and always, the help of the Lord our God. A Negro preacher often was heard praying for divine unction. One of his parishioners asked him, "What is unction?" His reply was, "I don't know what it is but I know when I ain't got it." We may not fully understand how the strength of God operates or what channels it may take, but when we receive it, we know it, for victory will always be the result.

Every living thing—the beast of the field, the fowl of the air, the fish of the sea—the leaf on the tree, the grain in the field—everything has its own special enemy that seeks to destroy it. And man has not, neither can he ever escape this conflict. The biggest wars in history have not been fought on land, sea or in the air, but in the human heart. There is the conflict of duty and desire; of love and hate;

of truth and prejudice; of evil and good. Some of our foes are spiritual, they are not seen but they are real: doubts, fears, unworthy appetites, an ungenerous spirit, undisciplined impulses. But some are specifically physical: the lust of the flesh, the pride of life, the lure of dishonesty, impurity, and profanity. Yes, it's a fight, and a hard fight even to the end of the journey. The Bible urges us to fight the good fight of faith, not the bad fight of hate. Paul said he had fought a good fight. If ever a man knew and understood the conflicts of life, Paul did. In Romans, Chapter Seven, he describes the character, intensity and outcome of this fierce struggle, concluding with the ejaculation and interrogation of a worn battler, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me . . .?" But he triumphantly concludes. "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 7: 24-25)

Yes, strength is needed by us all, prophet and layman; parent and child; capital and labor; employer and employee; diplomats and statesmen; ranchers, farmers, and all the toilers in every area of life. Those who work with their hands and those who work with their minds. Scientists, physicians, nurses, and all who seek to hold aloft the lamp of truth in a dark world—all, with no exception, need the empowering, the infilling, the enabling of the Spirit of God. We are simply not sufficient to stand alone against the bludgeonings of life, its trials, heartaches, disappointments, frustrations, and broken friendships.

Somewhere I have read of a tribe of Indians that had a rule that when a boy was ten years of age, he was given a bow and three arrows, and sent into the wilderness to live by himself for three days, providing his own food and shelter. And, at each eventide, he was to climb the highest eminence to be found and lift his hands to the Great Spirit and say, "Here am I, O Spirit, needy and helpless." It would

be a salutary practice for us all to humble ourselves before the Great God and confess not only our sins but our utter inadequacy in the crises of life. David once cried, "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul. I cried unto thee, O Lord: I said thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living." (Ps. 142:4-5) And this brings us to our next thought:

Strength Will Be Provided

Few men are more beloved to Bible readers than Daniel In the tenth chapter of his prophecy we are told that while he was alone he saw a person wondrously attired, and that when he saw him his own strength left him. And then this Person, for he was a messenger of God, spoke to Daniel words of good cheer and promise. Following this amazing experience, Daniel said, "Thou hast strengthened me." (Dan. 10:19) Now the Bible is really a book of promises Some have said there are thirty thousand promises scattered through the Scriptures. I cannot vouch for that, but it would seem to me there must be that many or more Promises for body and soul; for life and death; for time and eternity. They are as jewels to enrich us; food to sustain us; guides to direct us; hands to hold us; warnings to rebuke us and hope to encourage us. Many years ago, a man said that every promise in the Bible is supported by four pillars: God's justice which will not allow him to deceive us; God's grace which will not allow him to forget us; God's truth which will not allow him to change; and God's power that will enable him to perform what he promises.

A memory test was being given to some Sunday School children. They were asked who could quote the twentythird Psalm. The hand of a little girl went up. When the teacher asked her to step forward and quote it, she very primly bowed before the group, then said, "The Lord is my shepherd, and that's all I want." Then she sat down. Well, she had the heart of the whole matter. If we know him, if we have him, if we love him and are assured of him, other things will fall into their proper place, and we shall make the grand discovery that "our sufficiency is of God." (II Cor. 3:5) "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." (Ps. 46:1) Not an absent help, not a probable help nor a conditional help but a "present help." And this help is not a theory or speculation nor a denial of trouble, but a Person, "be strong in the Lord." He is the secret and source of our competence. We do not produce the strength but we must appropriate it. "The Lord is my strength and shield," said David. And again he admonishes us, "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage and he shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord." And waiting time is not wasted time! The time we spend in waiting on God, and before God and for God is the best time we can spend anywhere. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." (Isa. 40:31) Yes, our strength must often be renewed by religious meditation and saintly worship. We must continually drink from the wells of salvation and feed upon holy manna and unite our hearts to serve him with gladness. "He restoreth my soul," said the sweet singer of Israel. In Moses' blessing of Asher he said, "And as thy days, so shall thy strength be." (Deut. 33:25) The word "strength" here means "flowing" and "wealth" and "old age," so we have the heart-warming suggestion that so long as one's days may last - even to "old age" - he can count on the continued flow of God's wealth, which will be sufficient for life and death and forever beyond.

In Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress the pilgrim came at last

to a wall against which a fire was burning. He saw the devil throwing water on it, yet the fire continued to burn brightly. Puzzled, he went behind the wall and discovered there was a pipe extending through the wall and an inexhaustible flow of oil was feeding the flame. Similarly we may count on God's faithfulness to supply all that is necessary to keep the holy flame of devotion burning brightly in our lives. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil. 4:13) Yes, he keeps pouring power into us. When we are committed to the Lord as Paul

was, we may have the glow of assurance he had when the Lord said to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." (II Cor. 12:9)

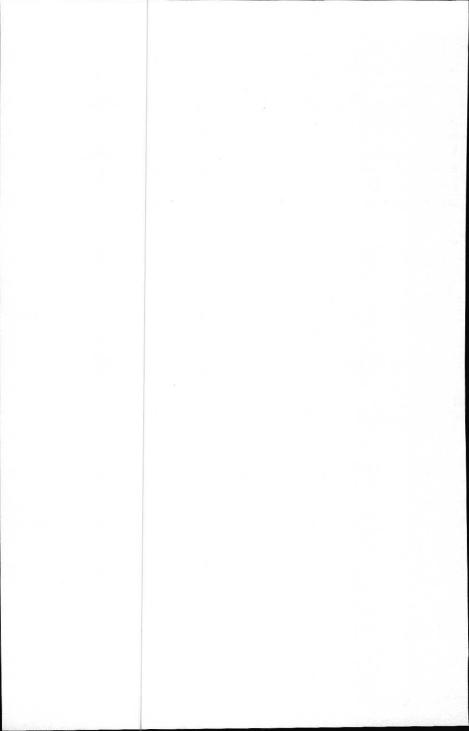
An old fairy story comes to mind. It seems that Siegfried and his friend Gunther went into the North Country to win fortune. After many weeks of travelling, they came to

a tribe of people, big in body and very hospitable. Siegfried fell in love with the king's daughter, but, in order to marry her, he was required to pass many tests, consisting of difficult physical feats. On the night before the great and final test, he was reassured by Gunther that he need not fear, for said Gunther, "I will be with you." The next morning his friend was not to be found. Siegfried went to the testing ground sad of heart; his friend had failed him. He was commanded to throw a very heavy spear a certain distance. It seemed an impossible feat. But as he stooped to pick up the spear, it became light in his hand, and the voice of his friend Gunther whispered, "I am here to help you." The

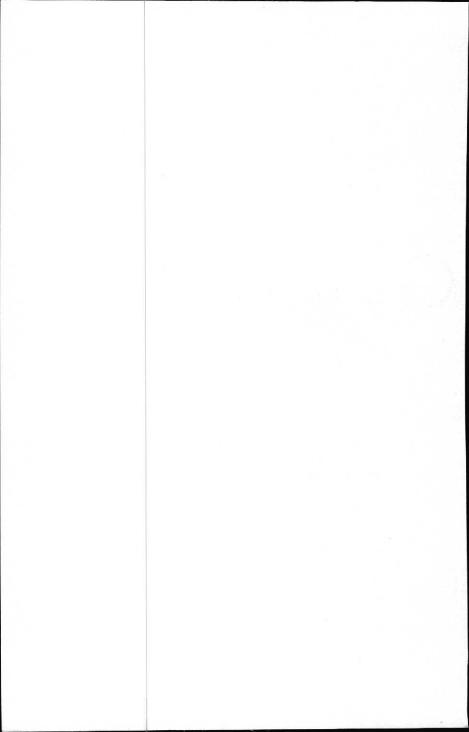
spear was thrown much farther than required, to the amazement. of the king. Siegfried was next required to throw a large boulder so many paces. As he picked it up, it became

lady, but Gunther was the unseen companion who made it all possible.

And so as we face the many issues of life, with the fiery darts of the wicked one falling around us, we may look for and confidently expect the strength and protecting grace of God to "carry us through" — through the storms, through the night, even unto the dawn of the perfect day when cares and toils are known no more. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." Amen!



GLIMPSES of GOD



Glimpses of God

Romans 15

This chapter opens with a tender appeal, a plea that the strong—those with settled convictions and firm faith—should bear the infirmities of the weak. "Infirmities," not sins; but doubts, scruples or weaknesses. We are not only to have a seeing eye but a helping hand, a tender heart and a willing spirit. Then we are to make it a "practice" of pleasing our neighbor with the purpose in view of "building him up" in the faith, so he can stand on his own feet.

A Mr. J. C. Haynes tells of walking down a street one day and seeing a man who had an artificial foot. He was hopping around, trying to stand up, leaning against a wall, looking most distressed. When asked the trouble he replied, "I have lost a screw that holds my foot on my leg." Mr. Haynes asked the size of the screw, then told the man to lean against a building, while he went to a nearby store and purchased one. Upon his return, he took the artificial foot, put it in place, inserted the screw, tightened it and the man stood up with a smile, saying, "You have put a man on his feet today." This sort of "occupation" would revolutionize any community, any home and all churches; to put people on their feet — what a glorious and rewarding work!

To look upon the needs of others with tender solicitude; to observe their tests and trials with compassionate regard; to urge them into the way of the Lord with earnest entreaty; to remember them when we have the ear of the King; all this is indeed a grace greatly to be desired, sought after and practiced. And the inspiration for such a spirit is the example of our blessed Lord who was willing to endure shame and blame because he came "not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many." (Mat. 20:28)

Now in verses 5, 13, and 33, we have four remarkable glimpses of God, pictures of his essential nature and beating heart.

The God of Patience

His patience (his endurance or his ability to give endurance) is not that of Brahminism where personality has vanished or the will is inactive. It is not the patience of panthesism where nature and God are equated. It is neither the patience of the impersonal or the unconscious "Absolute," nor the patience of a colorless, unfeeling abstraction. It is not the patience of an exaggerated transcendentalism, with the Creator sitting idle and outside the universe, watching impassively the struggles, tears, heartbreaks and sins of his creatures. It does not mean he is a sort of "cream puff" Deity

looking with grandfatherly indulgence when people live and act like the devil.

God's patience is that of power held in reserve; of strength that is self-limited; of complete knowledge blended and brightened with hope; of justice tempered with mercy. In the language of Scripture, it simply but blessedly means he "is long suffering toward usward not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (II Peter 3:9) It means that all the day long he extends his welcoming hands to a disobedient and unruly people. (Rom. 10:21)

We have thought of God as omnipotent and omnipresent and omniscient, but here he is described and portrayed as the "God of patience." This delightful, cordial and relieving tone runs through the Bible, beginning in Genesis. When Adam had transgressed God's commandment and the shame of it had overwhelmed him and his equally disobedient wife, leading them to seek a hiding place "among the trees," we read that the Lord came seeking and calling, "Where art thou?" The form of this question indicates a repeated calling. It is as if the Almighty, not content with one call, kept repeating it, not once nor twice but many times: "Where art thou, where art thou?" And his plaintive cry even today over every wandering soul is, "How can I give thee up?"

His long-suffering in the days of Noah becomes all the more remarkable when we read, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Gen. 6:5) And, despite their long record of offenses and transgressions piled heaven high, and their impudent violation of his righteous commandments, he endured the Jewish nation for four hundred years before an invading army of barbarians overcame Israel by his per-

missive providence. And as we consider our own promises, so often broken; God's commandments so often violated; and his precious mercies so often scorned; as we consider the hatreds and jealousies that turn men and nations into raging beasts of destruction; the thirsty greed that impels people after gold instead of God; the foul impurities so shamelessly practiced as to make the angels blush and the very stars close their bright eyes — then, then we begin to see and to some extent understand the amazing wonder of God's patience.

Is this patience ever exhausted? Does he ever reach the place where he says of rebellious, disobedient and impenitent souls, as he formerly said of Ephraim: "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone"? (Hosea 4:17) At any rate, the message is crystal clear: we are not to despise (trifle with) the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering. It is the very goodness of God that should lead us to repentance. (Rom. 2:4)

The God of Comfort

This was the theme of our Lord's first discourse at Nazareth. He quoted from Isaiah 61:1f: "and there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" [oppressed]. (Luke 4:17) Now, our Lord has a complete monopoly on power (Mat. 28:18), on grace (I Peter 5:10), and comfort (II Cor. 1:3). "Comfort" is a positive word and "to comfort" is a positive act, much stronger than "to console." It carries with it the idea of bringing cheer and encouragement, and at the same time

imparting strength. Who on earth or among men can do this as can the Lord our God, who is acquainted with grief, testing and trial, and who knows the meaning of trouble of every kind; being tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin?

In Hebrews 13:6 we read, "The Lord is my helper." Now that word "helper" is a compound word with two ideas: "to run" and "to cry." So a helper is "one who runs to the cry of another." When our hearts are sore with pain; when we have been outraged by betrayal or forsaken by professed friends; when we cry out in the darkness of despair, he sees that humiliation, understands that trial, and "runs" to cheer our broken hearts and add his strength to our weakness. Hallelujah, what a Savior!

When John Paton took his lovely but frail bride with him to the New Hebrides that he might bring the Gospel to those forgotten people, he was supremely happy in the thought that they were in the will of God. One day, however, his dear companion went down into the valley of the shadow to bring forth another life, and she did not come back! He was disconsolate. He dug the grave for her by himself. The little babe had expired also. He laid that precious form, with the little one in her arms, in that faraway grave. In anguish his soul was crushed. Later he wrote, "Had it not been for the presence of my Savior, I too would have died beside that lonely grave."

F. B. Meyer once wrote, "No earthly friend may tread the winepress with you, but the Savior is there. His garments are stained with the blood of the grapes of your sorrow. Dare to repeat it often, 'Jesus, Jesus, thou art with me.' So you will become conscious that he is there." Yes, and let us often read Isaiah 41:10: "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not afraid for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

The God of Hope

Do you suppose the Lord our Savior-God ever becomes discouraged, disheartened, disenchanted? Have you ever thought he might feel that his loving-kindness and tender mercy are all in vain? Is it possible that he ever looks upon some rebellious will, stubborn heart and disobedient life and, as it were, throws up his hands and cries in despair, "What's the use?"

Just to ask such questions chills our spirit. A hopeless God! A God without hope? Perish the thought. At Caesarea Philippi he asked a little handful of unlettered men, "Who am I?" And Simon Peter answered for all of them when he said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And it was to this little band of believing disciples and others like them that he said, "I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it [get the upper hand]. What blessed and brave hope! And once more he said, "Fear not, little flock [there is a double diminutive — little, little]; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." (Luke 12:32) The Kingdom is to be sought but it cannot be bought. It is a gift.

Yes, he is the God of hope. Does this mean hope is a quality of his nature or he is the source of hope? Both are true. He has it and he gives it. Note this magnificent Scripture, "And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool." (Heb. 10: 11-13) "Expecting." He lived on the tiptoe of expectancy, hopefully looking forward to the time every knee would bow and every tongue confess; anticipating that glad and thrill-

ing time when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. 11:9)

As he imparts hope to a kernel of corn, a grain of wheat, a blade of grass — hope that they shall mature and fulfill their destiny and become waving fields of life-giving strength to man and beast — so he not only imparts hope to us but justifies it, approves it and rewards it. These things being true, it is surely not the will of God that his people should be discouraged, dejected, or depressed, but rather they should "abound loverflowl in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit." (Rom. 15:13)

I cannot do it alone;
The waves run fast and high,
And the fogs close chill around,
And the light goes out in the sky,
But I know that we two shall win in the end —
Jesus and I.

Coward and wayward and weak,
I change with the changing sky,
Today so eager and brave,
Tomorrow not caring to try;
But he never gives in, so we two shall win —
Jesus and I.

- Dan Crawford

The God of Peace

There are three kinds of peace spoken of in the New Testament. Peace from God. "... peace from God our father." (Phil. 1:2) Peace with God. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have [or let us have] peace with God." (Rom. 5:1) And the peace of God. "And the peace of God which passeth all understanding..." (Phil. 4:7)

Now what is peace? For one thing, it is harmony. The

harmony of sound is music. The harmony of thought and words is poetry. The harmony of color is beauty. And the harmony of the soul and God is peace. To be sure there is no division between my soul and my Savior is to possess a serenity that can be found in no other way.

But peace is also the assurance of adequate resources. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil. 4:17) Spurgeon tells of a little mouse who got into one of the storehouses of Egypt which Joseph had built and filled with grain during the seven years of plenty in that land, against the day of famine and want. The mouse had somehow heard of the prediction that seven years of famine were coming. As he nibbled away on this vast mountain of grain, he began to weep and said, "I know we shall all starve to death!" Of course, the entire idea was ridiculous, and the illustration absurd, as Mr. Spurgeon intended it to be. But do we never doubt the faithfulness of God? Paul speaks of the exceeding greatness of his power toward usward who believe. (Eph. 1:19) And he also makes a glorious affirmation by way of a moving benediction: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us. . . ." (Eph. 3:20) And when we remember our God has "exceeding riches" (Eph. 2:7) and that he has promised not to leave us "orphans," surely we have found the secret of peace.

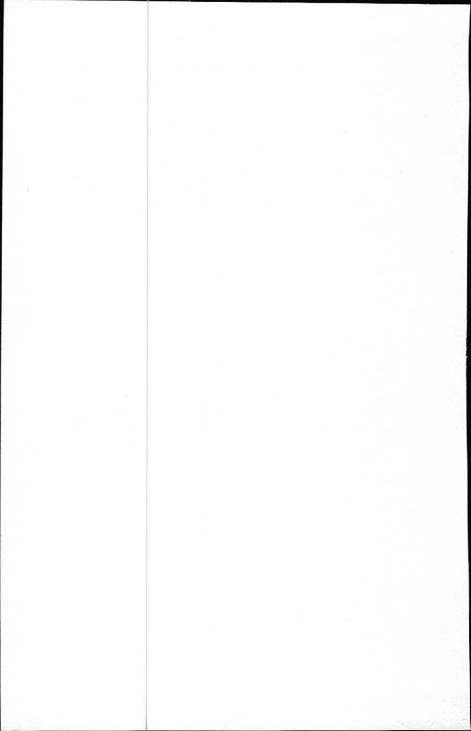
But, once more, peace consists of adjustment. When our daughter was about two years of age, she was delighted for me to swing her around, holding both of her little arms. One night we were having a happy time in this way, and it may be I was swinging her too fast or hard, but she became afraid and twisted her little body in some way that brought a loud cry from her. Of course, I immediately took her in my arms and tried to find out just what hurt, but she was

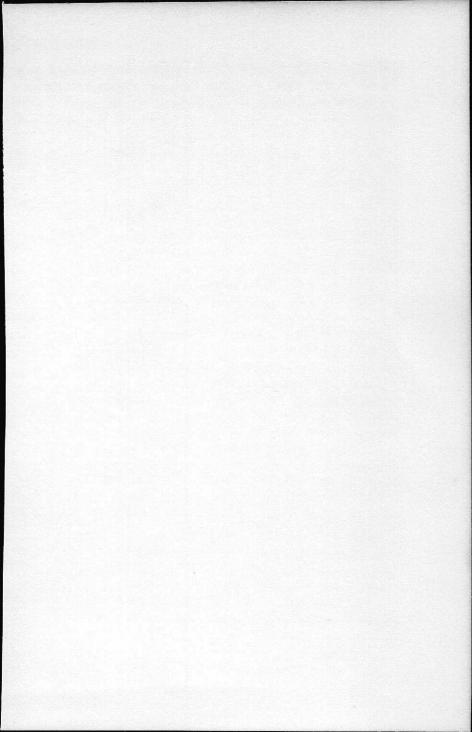
in such pain I took her to a doctor who lived next door. He tenderly felt of her shoulder and said, "Her arm is out of joint." Then, with a quick jerk, he slipped the arm back into place, and the pain was gone; and she was able to use her arm as if it had never been out of joint. It is something like this Paul teaches when he says, "Being justified [put back into proper relation] by faith, we have [or let us have] peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:1) When we are in proper "adjustment," peace is the blessed result, and we can then function with and work for God as if we never had been out of "adjustment." Wonderful truth! Wonderful peace!

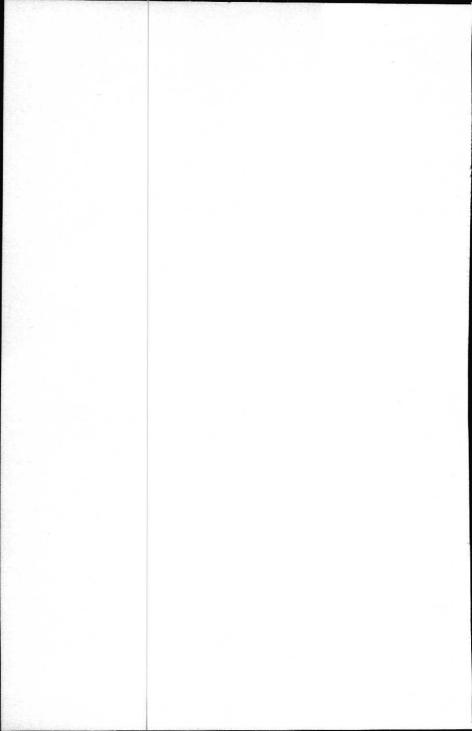
But what is it that destroys our peace? Is it trouble, disappointment, failure? It need not be. It is possible to carry a lighted candle even in the wind if there is a sheltering hand around it. And it is sublimely possible that the light of our trembling hearts, blown upon by so many winds of adversity, may yet burn steadily with the glow of peace, if the hand of the Lord is about us.

Is it some sin that has destroyed our peace, that has brought a burning, gnawing anxiety? Well, we still may find peace in confession and repentance. "If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (I John 1:9)

When the prodigal son came to himself, he came to his father, and said: "I have sinned . . . and am no more worthy. . . ." (Luke 15:21) And in that hour of personal confession and acknowledgment, he passed from darkness to light, from misery to mercy and from condemnation to salvation.







[CONTINUED FROM FRONT FLAP]

ministry to every serious student of communicating the Bible's message to the needs of men."

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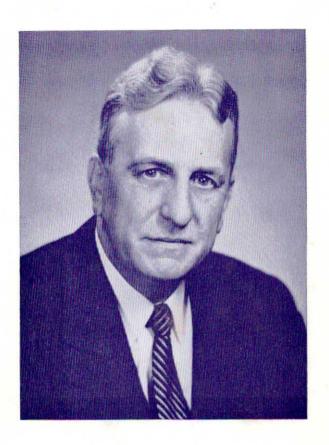
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GEORGE E. STEWART Superintendent of Missions San Antonio Baptist Association

The title chosen by Dr. Webb for this collection of sermons is, in itself, a sermon in a phrase. Not just the sun and the moon but all the stars, which He made also — even unto infinity — declare the glory of God and indicate His unlimited bounty.





The Reverend Perry F. Webb, B.A., Th.B., D.D. and LL.D., received Doctor of Divinity degrees from Ouachita Baptist College and also from Baylor University. The Doctor of Laws degree was conferred by Howard Payne College. He also received the first Distinguished Alumnus Award from his Alma Mater. After serving three pastorates in Arkansas, he came to San Antonio as pastor of the First Baptist Church, a post he held until his retirement twenty-four years later. Dr. Webb has assumed many church, civic and educational responsibilities through the years. Always in demand as a speaker, he now devotes a great deal of time to Bible Conference work.